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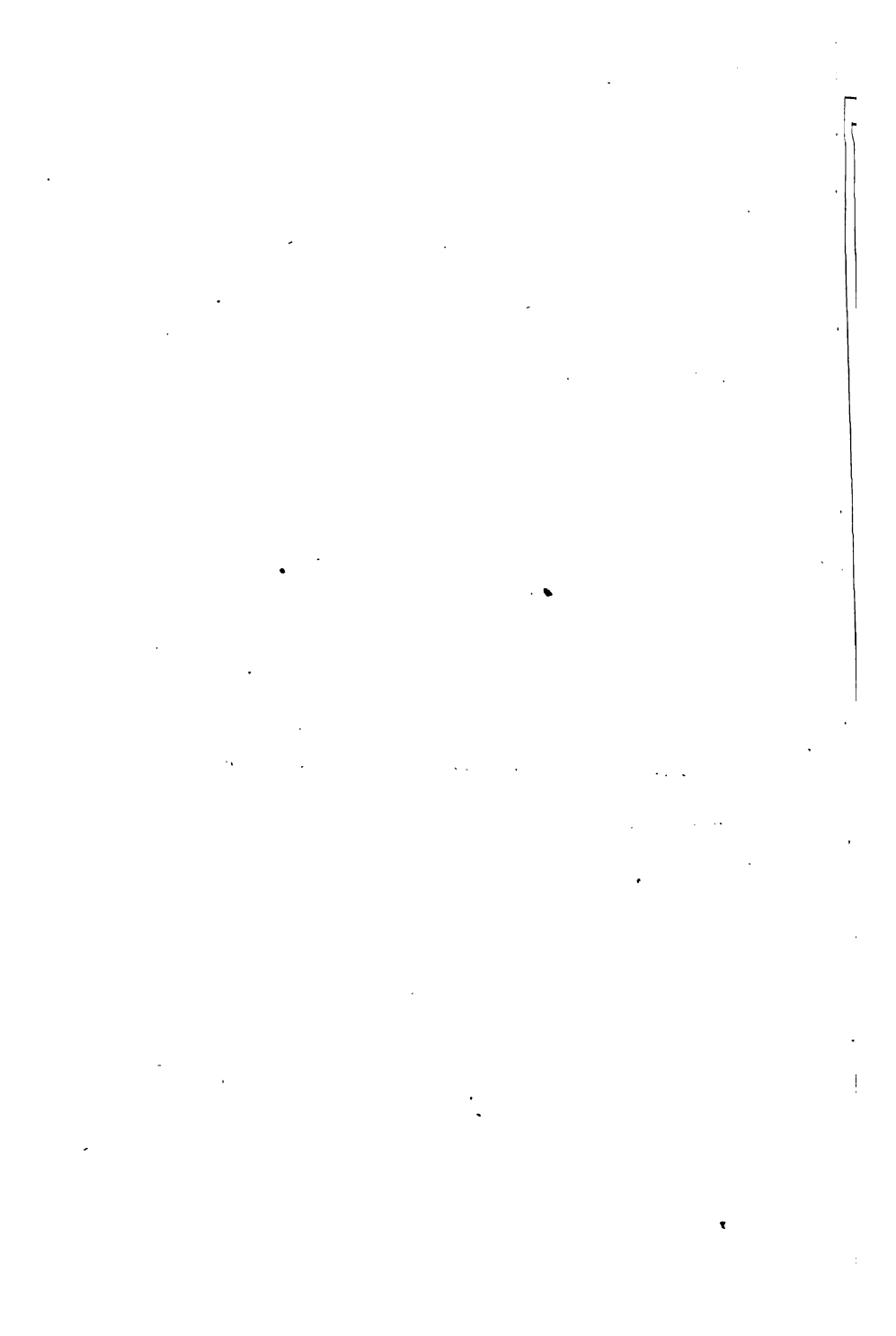
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REALITIES:
OR,
THE MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD
In Past Ages
CONSIDERED AS EARNESTS OF THE FUTURE.

BY
E. R.

"The LORD is known by the judgment which He executeth."

PSALM 9. 16.

"Declare His glory among the heathen, His wonders among all people."

PSALM 96. 3.

"I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto THEE, O LORD, will I sing."

PSALM 101. 1.

LONDON:
WILLIAM YAPP, 70, WELBECK STREET. W.
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1862.

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"It is by placing the character of God and the character of man, as it were in juxta-position, the one over against the other, that we can best understand both. This relation of God and man, the one towards the other, is the department of divine and human knowledge in which, in our humble opinion, this generation has most need to be instructed."—M'COSH: *The Method of the Divine Government.*

"If man be a reality, no empty vision in the dreaming soul of nature, but, as who shall doubt he is, inwardly substantial and personal, that which he most earnestly desires, which best satisfies his whole being, must be real too."—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

INTRODUCTION.

IN this free and happy country, notes and commentaries, illustrations and expositions,—all professing to elucidate the Book of God,—spring up like true plants of a Bible land. Where books on the Bible so abound, some reason for adding to their number may, possibly, be demanded by the reader. The adequacy of the reason can alone be proved by the contents; while the reason itself arose out of some of those casual circumstances which might occur to any person who feels an interest in the truth of God.

A request was presented to the writer to undertake the instruction of others in a Bible class. From inexperience in that mode of tuition, the proposal would have been declined; but long association with the Sunday-school, from whose ranks of past and present scholars the class was about to be formed, and other favouring circumstances, induced the conviction that the Lord was thus appointing new service for himself, and the request was complied with.

Trusting in the Lord, and endeavouring to make His Word the teacher of the class, the Bible was opened at the Book of Genesis. The first few chapters brought the co-relations of sin, judgment, and mercy, under

consideration; and references to texts shewing their connection were noted down in three parallel columns. Some thoughtful utterances from an almost stranger on the prevailing unconsciousness concerning the guilt of sin in the sight of a holy God, reflected a new interest on this previously selected series of subjects; and, within a very short period, similar remarks were made by an entire stranger. "What saith the Scripture" was more deeply impressed upon the mind of the writer; the skeleton references were then expanded into a consecutive narrative; and the three distinct subjects indicated by coloured inks: the red, shewing the sin of man; the blue, the judgments of the Lord; and the purple, the mercies of the Lord.

That man is a sinner before God,—that God hates sin, and must punish it,—and that the Lord will have mercy on some men,—are facts generally admitted: but their importance is not felt until our own individual sinfulness occupies our thoughts; until we reflect on the judgments which we have deserved, and on the mercies which the Lord has promised to bestow on us individually, if we by faith are united to His Son.

Our personal concern in sin, judgment, and mercy, necessarily leads us to Him on whom our transgressions were laid; to Him who bore the judgments of God for us; and through whom alone we can now receive the mercies of God.

We look back on the sacrifices which were offered up for sin, and see in them foreshadowings of the One great Sacrifice: we contemplate the lives of the patriarchs and prophets, and see in them some anticipations of the life of Christ. The New Testament teaches that the earlier revelation presents shadows of more perfect things yet to come; and we would in the position of

learners endeavour, by that which has been already made manifest, to anticipate that which is yet future.

In ordinary affairs, where that which is clearly known stands in some definite relation to that which is less perfectly apprehended, our liability to err does not prevent us from enlarging our conceptions of the latter by the conclusions we draw from the former: and we are permitted to learn the future purposes of God toward man by carefully considering His prophecies concerning the future in their relations to His past acts of judgment and mercy. Throughout the Bible, we find it is the will of God that we should know Him by His past manifestations toward man: and He has by one prophet, Ezekiel, taught us as many as sixty times, that He is to be known by His judgments and mercies.

We may be further encouraged in seeking a more intimate knowledge of God by remembering the visions which He granted to some persons whose eyes He is said to have opened, and who, in suddenly seeing before them that which was especially suited to their circumstances, must have learnt the character of Him who thus supplied their wants, or who admonished them for evil doings. When Ishmael was dying from thirst, God opened the eyes of Hagar, and she saw a well of water; and, as distinct perception leads to corresponding action, "she went and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink." At another time, the Lord opened the eyes of a prophet's timid servant; he then saw a "mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." And when the persecuting Saul saw the light from heaven, and heard the voice asking why he persecuted Him, the ascended Saviour, the trembling and astonished pharisee repented of his deeds, and said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and his after

life was spent in doing his Lord's will. But when the Lord opened the eyes of the wealth-loving Balaam, he saw the Angel of the Lord standing before him with a drawn sword in his hand; and Balaam was for a time constrained to unwilling obedience. In these days we do not seek such manifestations; yet we may adopt the words of the Psalmist, and expect the blessing he desired, when he said, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law:" and we may, like the Bereans, search the Scriptures daily, and like them, receive the word with all readiness of mind.

And if this arrangement of Scripture, which arose from a Bible-class, and was afterwards further developed, should lead any reader to Jesus as the Sin-bearer and the Dispenser of mercy; or should induce any one to rejoice more fully in promised blessings, and to live more obediently to the precepts of the Lord: or if any of those who sincerely love Him, and are diligently serving Him, should find these pages useful in conveying instruction to others,—the writer will rejoice in having been thus led on in the Lord's service.

This introduction to a remembrancer of God's holy book may be suitably closed with the prayer of the venerable Dr. Merle D'Aubigné:—"Let not thy Word depart from this land, as it has departed from other lands. Keep this people close to thy Word—O keep this people close to thy Word. This is my prayer, this is my petition. Keep them close to thy Word. Let it be sovereign, living, efficacious in their hearts. Keep them close to thy Word, in the love of Jesus, and by the power of the Holy Ghost!" Amen.

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In the following Scriptural Narrative,

The *red* print denotes the sin of man;

The *blue*, the judgments of the Lord;

The *purple*, His acts of mercy; and

The *black* type, some connecting links of history and
prophecy, with occasional remarks.

Book I.

CHAPTER I.

"A voice to Light gave Being;
To Time, and Man his earth-born chronicler;
A Voice shall finish doubt and dim foreseeing,
And sweep away life's visionary stir;
The trumpet (we, intoxicate with pride,
Arm at its blast for deadly wars,)
To archangelic lips applied,
The grave shall open, quench the stars."

WORDSWORTH.

Book I.

CHAPTER I.

THE CREATION—KNOWLEDGE OF THE PAST AND OF THE FUTURE—RECORDS OF THE CREATION.

ALL men desire some knowledge of the future. To the great God of heaven and earth, a thousand years are as one day: therefore finite man cannot conceive the relations of past, present, and future as existing in His eternal mind.

But, in His infinite mercy, He has made man in His own image, and, as part of that image or resemblance, He has made him capable of knowing what is past, and to some extent of foreseeing the future. He has also made the capacity of knowing the realities of the past, of reflecting upon them, and of anticipating the realities of the future to be sources of the most elevated enjoyment. Not only to gratify this desire, and exercise this capacity, but to enable man unfailingly to prepare for the future, God has revealed to His servants a history of the past, and has given them definite prophecies concerning the future.

And as He has thus implanted the power and the desire to know the future, and has for a definite purpose given the means of gratifying that desire, it must be man's duty, and a part of his vocation on earth, to

enquire concerning the future—concerning his own individual future. And, since God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, we may expect the history of His past manifestations of himself would be the best guide by which to anticipate the future manifestations of himself. Thus, we may learn, not only what He is to us now, and what we are now before Him, but what He will be to us, and what we shall be before Him throughout an endless eternity.

With this deeply personal subject of contemplation in view, we begin to read the history of the creation of our world, as we find it in several parts of the book of God.

It is an interesting fact, that those inspired writers, who more particularly mention the creation, had been placed in peculiar positions for knowing God, and consequently for receiving all truth concerning Him in its strength and purity. Moses, the first of these inspired writers, was for forty days and forty nights with God, in Mount Sinai. There he received such an impress of the divine glory, that the people of Israel could not stedfastly look upon him. He began his revealed history thus, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

2 Cor. 3. 7.

Gen. 1. 1.

John 1. 1-3, 10.

John, that favoured disciple, who leaned on the bosom of the Son of God, has left His testimony, that the creation was the work of the Son of God. He writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."

2 Cor. 12. 1-4.

Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, who was caught up into Paradise, and who there heard unspeakable words,

confirmed the record of John. He tells us that Christ, the Anointed One, laid the foundations of the earth, Heb. 1. 9, 10. that the heavens were the works of His hands; and that by the Son of God, the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, "were all things created, Col. 1. 13-16. that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and Eph. 3. 9. invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him."

How far back to date the beginning of creation is not told us in the inspired book of God. The earth is its own great register; and we believe is not yet fully opened to the inspection of its earnest readers. For its leaves adhere so closely one to the other, that what ere-while appeared as a single leaf is sometimes found to be a series of unseparated leaves. And as each leaf, and each page of a leaf, bears its own peculiar character, this great chronology of creation will long tax the faculties of those who wish to measure its extent.

See Geology
v. Astronomy.
H. Miller.

From the book of Revelation we learn, that the successive steps in the progress of creation were effected by the potent words, "Let there be;" and whatsoever was commanded came into existence, and moved in its appointed sphere; and God pronounced that it was very good.

Gen. 1. 3, 6, 14.

“PHILOSOPHERS have measured mountains,
Fathom'd the depths of seas, of states, and kings,
Walk'd with a staff to heaven, and traced fountains:

But there are two vast, spacious things,
The which to measure it doth more behove:
Yet few there are that sound them—Sin and Love.”

G. HERBERT.

Book I.

CHAPTER II.

**THE SIN OF MAN—THE CURSE CONSEQUENT ON SIN—REDEMPTION BY
THE SEED OF THE WOMAN—GREATNESS OF FUTURE BLESSINGS.**

WHEN the earth was created, and the light was shining upon it; when order was established, and the earth, air, and water were teeming with living inhabitants, instead of "Let there be," we read words of deeper import, even, "Let us make,"—"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in His own image, in the likeness of God created He him; male and female created He them." "And God blessed them." And as part of His blessing, He placed them in a garden, in every way prepared for their enjoyment. He gave them dominion over all inferior things; the sympathy of an equal, and high communion with Himself, the everlasting God. With these varied accessories to happiness, the Lord God gave man a test of obedience—one only intimation of subjection to Himself, saying, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Gen. 1. 26-31.
Gen. 2. 17.

In this first and only trial of his obedience man failed. With every thing around, above, and beneath to contribute to his enjoyment, the test may appear to us but small; yet in it we see our own life before God. Eve saw that the forbidden "tree was good for food,

and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." God had said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But Satan, the liar, the father of lies, first questioned, then boldly contradicted the word of the Lord, and said, "Ye shall not surely die." Eve yielded to the desire of her eyes. She believed Satan, and disregarded the word of the Lord. "She took of the fruit (of the tree), and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." Thus sin entered the new and perfect creation of God.

Gen. 3. 8-24. The voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day, was heard by Adam and his wife; but they were now afraid of Him, who before must have been their greatest joy. Now, they endeavoured to hide themselves from Him who had so wondrously prepared the earth for their habitation. But, "the Lord God called unto Adam." And when, from His questions, Adam had confessed his guilt, the Lord passed a sentence of condemnation; first, on the serpent, the agent of the tempter; then on the woman, on Adam, and upon the earth, the scene of the transgression. Degradation to the dust was the portion of the serpent; sorrow and subjection were allotted to the woman; sorrow and severe toil to the man; and the earth should henceforth bear thorns and thistles.

And, "lest Adam should put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden." "So, He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

Death now became the portion of man, as well as of the inferior creation. And the curse of sorrow, which was severally pronounced on the man and on the woman, is daily seen in the heated brow, in the weeping eye, and in the toil-worn hand. In every dwelling of man its voice is heard. But on one spot of earth the accumulated woe of ages concentrated itself upon one head. In the garden of Eden, the curse was pronounced. In the garden of Gethsemane, the curse was endured. By eating the forbidden fruit of a tree, the curse was merited. By the Son of God hanging on the accursed tree, the full penalty of the curse was paid. By the bitter anguish of that dark hour, which was revealed in those solemn words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—which was seen in the drops of blood poured out from the mental agony within, the curse of sin was completely fulfilled

Matt. 27. 46.

Luke 22. 44.

Four thousand years had passed before the Son of God bore the curse of sin for man. Four thousand years had also passed away before the nature of the curse on the old serpent was made known to man. How near may be the manifestation of that curse in his thousand years' imprisonment, or how long before his final punishment in the lake of fire, we know not. But we know that the certainty of his future torment rests on the same inspired word of the Lord, which records the first transgression. And as we are now continually seeing the fruit of this first sin, so we shall hereafter see, either as witnesses, or as partakers, the future torment of the Tempter.

Rev. 20. 1-10.

But such is the infinite love of God, that in the midst of threatenings of deserved wrath, He pronounces a blessing. In those few words to the serpent, "it (that

is, the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head," He revealed a blessing, the extent of which eternity alone can disclose. When in those few words we see the latent promise, that the Son of God—the seed of the woman, should cast out Satan, and by His death should destroy him that had the power of death—that is, the devil; when we see that the bruising of the serpent's head may receive so large an interpretation; when we see in these few words of mercy the purpose of the most High to restore man by the sacrifice of His Son, what bounds can we set to the fulfilment of all the promises that follow? How shall we measure the things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, but which God hath prepared for them that love Him? how conceive the unmingled blessedness of man, when for a thousand years his great enemy shall be bound in the bottomless pit; when the fruit of the tree of life may be freely eaten by all who have kept the commandments of God; when He who gave the promise, and who died to fulfil it, shall be seen as the King of kings, and Lord of lords, as the judge of the whole earth, and as the bridegroom of the church? Verily, no bounds can be put by man, to the loving-kindness of the Lord; it is unsearchable—past finding out!

Luke 11. 14.

Heb. 2. 14.

1 Cor. 2. 9.

Rev. 20. 2, 3.

Rev. 2. 7.

Rev. 19. 2-16.

But, with the word of God in our hands, and an intuitive insight into our own thoughts, words, and actions, shall we not confess, that if Adam for his transgression was driven from Paradise, and entailed the taint of sin on all his posterity, we daily, by equal or by greater acts of disobedience, have deserved the eternal wrath of God? Then the unfathomable love that found out a way to pardon Adam's sin, is the love we need, and the love we can alone trust for all eternity.

Book I.

CHAPTER III.

"UNWORTHY is thanksgiving,
All service stain'd with sin;
Except as thou art living,
Our priest, to bear it in.
In ev'ry act of worship,
In ev'ry loving deed,
Our thoughts around thee centre,
As meeting all our need."

Book I.

CHAPTER III.

CAIN AND ABEL.

IN the history of the first two sons of Adam, we see Gen. 4. 1-15. the Lord manifesting himself as a God of justice, and a God of mercy. In the history of these primeval sons of man, we also see the germ of all the good and evil, which from that time has filled the page of human history. The evil of Cain and the good of Abel are each concentrated in and around two sacrifices. From those early days of man's history, we have received no record of prescribed sacrifice. But a later revelation throws much light on the distinctive principles involved in these two offerings. And this later revelation will help us to discern whether we offer the sacrifice of Cain or that of Abel. For, be it remembered, that Cain offered a sacrifice, an offering of gratitude to the Lord, called in our version a meat-offering,—that he had some “delight in approaching God,”—that he wished to come Isa. 58. before the Lord as His people come—to sit before Eze. 33. 31. Him as His people sit. And part of that punishment, which he accounted greater than he could bear, was that he would be separated from the Lord. In his bitter wail we find, “And from thy face shall I be hid.” Under these circumstances, should we not have esteemed

Cain a religious man? We should. But we may remember, that it is part of man's nature to reverence and to worship something. The question is, Could Cain have claimed the honours and privileges of a believer in God? He did believe in God; but the devils also believe, and tremble. In the parable, one son said, "I go, sir; but went not." And our Lord declared that the publicans and harlots would enter the kingdom of heaven before the most outwardly religious men of His day. Why? Because the latter sought to "establish their own righteousness;" they did not submit "to the righteousness of God." They justified themselves, while "their heart went after their covetousness." Like Cain, they were "not subject to the law of God," but chose their own sacrifice.

Matt. 21. 30-32.
Rom. 10. 2, 3.
Luke 16. 14, 15.
Rom. 8. 7.

The principle involved in one of these sacrifices is distinctly stated. It is said, "By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Faith implies some thing believed in; some person, or the word of some person. The statement, that a sacrifice was offered by faith, implies that a command to offer such sacrifice has been received and believed, and that the reliance on the authority or wisdom of the command rendered it acceptable to God. Nor is it too much to suppose that, in personal and oral communication with our first parents, the Lord had revealed to them the distinctions afterwards recorded by Moses, between sacrifices to take away sin, and gift-offerings which were required to be, or which were, sanctified by the previous remission of sin.

Heb. 11. 4.

We learn, that when Abel brought "the firstling of his flock and of the fat thereof," "the Lord had respect unto him and to his offering;" and that by his offering "he obtained witness that he was righteous." We fur-

ther learn, that "without shedding of blood is no remission" of sin. And we know, that until sin is pardoned, no other offering can be accepted. Heb. 9. 22.

Since by faith Abel offered the more excellent sacrifice, we infer that the sin of Cain was not the sin of ignorance, but the sin of unbelief. Whether the unbelief shewed itself in self-righteous reasoning concerning the necessity for atonement by blood-shedding, or by a specious preference for the cultivated fruits of the earth, as a more agreeable and convenient sacrifice than that appointed by God, we know not. Whatever the pretext for unbelief and disobedience, we find that "unto Cain and to his offering God had not respect." Gen. 4. 5.

We also learn, that he who slighted God's plan for the remission of sin soon gave himself up to those sins of which Satan is the especial patron—pride, envy, hatred, and murder. Cain would not shed the blood of an animal as a sacrifice to the God who had given him the dominion over it; but, as a sacrifice to his evil passions, he shed the blood of his own brother, over whom he had no dominion. Gen. 4. 1-8.

Cain was wroth that the Lord had not respect unto his offering, when he accepted the offering of his brother. And he "rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."

The curse of the Lord had fallen on the serpent, and on the ground; now it is proclaimed against wilful, self-exalting man. The Lord represents the curse as proceeding from the earth, which has opened her mouth to receive his brother's blood; and added, "When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee Gen. 4. 12, 13.

her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

Gen. 4. 13-15.

Yet, so great was the loving-kindness of the Lord, that when this murderer cried to Him, He heard him; and because he feared the immediate retribution of death, "the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him."

Book I.

CHAPTER IV.

"GREAT God, what do I see and hear?

The end of things created:

Behold the Judge of man appear,

On clouds of glory seated!

The trumpet sounds; the graves restore

The dead which they contain'd before:

Prepare, my soul, to meet Him.

"The dead in Christ shall first arise,

At the last trumpet's sounding;

Caught up to meet Him in the skies,

With joy their Lord surrounding:

No gloomy fears their souls dismay;

His presence sheds eternal day.

On those prepared to meet Him.

"But sinners, fill'd with guilty fears,

Behold His wrath prevailing;

For they shall rise and find their tears

And sighs are unavailing:

The day of grace is past and gone;

Trembling they stand before the throne,

All unprepared to meet Him."

LUTHER.

Book I.

CHAPTER IV.

ENOS AND ENOCH—A NEW ERA IN WORSHIP—PROPHECY BY WORD
AND DEED CONCERNING THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE SAINTS.

THE Lord gave to Adam another son, whom Eve named Gen. 4. 25, 26. Seth; and Seth had a son, whom he named Enos. Concerning the days of Enos it is said, "Then began men to call on the name of the Lord."

This brief description of the people of God in the time of Adam's grandson, leads us on step by step through every age of the church of God, until the time shall come when the Lord shall give to assembled nations Zeph. 3. 8, 9. and kingdoms "a pure language, (in order) that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent." This calling upon the name of the Lord in the time of Enos, cannot be intended to represent the commencement of true worship, since the sacrifice of Abel had already been accepted. We therefore conclude, that it must have been the beginning of some new character, or some new combination or association in the worship of God. Possibly some new revelation concerning the Mediator, through whose name alone all John 14. 13, 14; 16. 23. blessings are to be received, was then made known to the children of Adam. Or, according to the margin, it may indicate that in some public and combined act,

the men of faith were distinguished as "calling themselves by the name of the Lord." Even, as we find the Israelites on some occasions binding upon themselves the name of the Lord; and at other times pleading for special blessings, because the name of the Lord was upon them: and as we afterwards find the place recorded where the disciples were first called Christians, or called by the name of Christ.

Deut. 26. 16-18.
Isa. 44. 5.
63. 19.
Dan. 9. 18, 19.

Acts 11. 26.

From these great patriarchs, in process of time, there descended another servant of God named Enoch; which name signifies dedicated, or disciplined, or well-regulated. The name was a prophecy or portrait of the man.

Gen. 5. 21-23.

Of Enoch we have this short history. He begat a son, Methuselah; and then for three hundred years he walked with God, and still increased his earthly treasures of sons and daughters.

Jude 11, 14, 15.

He prophesied of judgment to all who walk in the way of Cain, saying, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Heb. 11. 5.

On these few facts of Enoch's life, we have the seal of God's approbation. He himself had the testimony that he pleased God. And because he pleased God, "God took him," or translated him, that he should not see death.

As from the apostle Jude we receive Enoch's verbal prophecy, so in the ascension of Enoch we see a prophetic fact—an illustration of the prophecy afterwards given by the apostle Paul, that the saints of earth

“shall be caught up.....in the clouds, to meet the Lord Thos. 4. 16, 17. in the air,” to be with Him for ever.

To contemplate the great realities of life and death, as they were made known to man in this first thousand years of time, is an occupation of no slight interest.

Human life, perfect in its kind, was granted in paradise. Life in mingled joy and woe was preserved in a world tainted with sin. And life, in intenser joy and in intenser woe, was then proclaimed in the promise, that saints shall come with their Lord, to judge ungodly sinners.

Though death was foretold as the consequence of the first transgression, the first infliction of the penalty was reserved for the murderous hand of man. And it was not until nine hundred and thirty years had run their course, that he who heard the announcement of death felt its power. And in less than sixty years after that event, the children of Adam were permitted to see, in the translation of Enoch, that the power of death was destroyed, and that “death was swallowed up in victory.” 1 Cor. 15. 54. Thus the Lord made himself known in judgment, in long-suffering, and in tender mercy. That the same God now watches over the inhabitants of the world is the teaching of Scripture, and the trust of the Christian; but this will afford no joy to those who are living after the way of their own heart.

"ONE righteous family, and only one,—
Saved from that wreck of Nature, shall behold
The new Creation rising from the old!"

MONTGOMERY.

Book I.

CHAPTER V.

THE FLOOD AND NOAH.

All mankind of one ancestry—Universal tradition agrees with the Scriptural narrative of the Flood—Heathen anticipations of the future—Facts of sin, judgment, and mercy—Unlimited fruitfulness of obedience—The three sons of Noah—Respective fulfilments of promised blessings, and of the curse.

THAT God “hath made of one blood all nations of Acts 17. 26. men,” we learn from the lips of an inspired apostle. And that all mankind, however various their hue or their form, bear a family relationship one to another is the testimony of intelligent travellers, and of the most eminent naturalists. With this unity of race may be associated a remarkable agreement in the traditions of distinct nations concerning some facts of the earliest ages, and as remarkable an agreement in the general character of their anticipations respecting the great eternal future. The skeleton memory of the past, and the anticipations of the future, though clothed with the varied tint of local imaginations, everywhere plainly portray the truths of Scripture. Thus, in the golden age of the poets, we see the paradise of Eden; and in the numerous fables respecting the serpent, the enemy who tempted Eve. A well-known author tells us, that “an Faber. idea of lost integrity seems to have pervaded nearly the

whole world, and to have inseparably mingled itself with the religious belief of almost every people." And that "this notion most particularly displayed itself in a constant desire of appeasing the Supreme Being, by sacrificial rites and superstitious observances." "The rude idolater of the recently-discovered hemisphere, and the polished votary of ancient polytheism, equally concur in the belief, that without shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins."

The tradition, of the great antediluvian wickedness, and the consequent destruction of the human race, one holy family alone excepted, is another most remarkable instance of this unity of idea or of memory, accompanied with the utmost variety of imagination. "The remembrance of the Flood," says Hugh Miller, "appears in almost every mythology, and lives in the most distant countries, and among the most barbarous tribes." And Humboldt tells us, that "in the great continents, as well as in the smallest islands of the Pacific Ocean, it is always on the loftiest and nearest mountain that the remains of the human race have been saved." In this variety of localization, each traditionary nation associates the saved family with its own ultimate parentage, and thus each sends a ray of light up to one point, in which all meet.

Instead of enumerating the ancient and learned nations, or the newly-found and nomade tribes, who retain distinct and peculiar traditions of the Deluge, we content ourselves with selecting some points of interest in the traditions themselves. And rather than the grotesque divergences from truth with which some mythologies abound, we prefer selecting the more definite coincidences of fact to be found among primitive nations of the East and West. Thus, in some Chaldean records it is stated,

that the great Flood occurred in the generation "the tenth in descent from the first created man;" in others, in the time of the tenth king of Babylon. The Chinese assert, that their flood was about the date corresponding with 3000 B.C. And the Egyptians relate, that Osiris, Hale's Chronology, 3195 B.C. their Noah, went into the ark on the 17th day of Athyr, when the sun passes through the sign Scorpio, the very day when the Noah of the Scriptures entered the ark. The tradition of the extinct Maypures of North America combines the record of the raven and the dove. The saved man, "wearying of the long continuance of the flood, sent out a crow, which at first did not return, staying to feed on the dead bodies, but afterwards returned bearing with it a green branch." The moral causes for the flood, when any are assigned, precisely agree with those given in the sacred narrative—the anger of God at the impiety and corruption of the human race. "All these evils arose," says a Chinese author, "from man's despising the supreme Monarch of the universe." And the man and his family who were saved, whether in a canoe, a raft, a bark, or a ship three-quarters of a mile in length, and half a mile in width, were saved by the special favour of the local god, of "the Mighty Man above," or of the Almighty God: while one tradition, which gives the several names of Noah's family, adds, that "he revered the gods, and was more wise and prudent than the rest of mankind."

Thus our threefold division of the Scripture narrative finds its place also in the universal traditions and memory of man.

And co-extensive with this knowledge of the past has been man's anticipation of the future. Pritchard, Natural History of Man, vol. 4, p. 668. whose acquaintance with the human race gives weight

to his report, says, "There is nothing more remarkable in the habitudes of mankind, and in their manner of existence in various parts of the world, than a reference, which is everywhere more or less distinctly perceptible, to a state of existence to which they feel themselves to be destined after the termination of their visible career, and to the influence which both civilized and barbarous men believed to be exercised over their condition, present and future, by unseen agents, differing in attributes according to the sentiments of different nations, but everywhere acknowledged to exist, and regarded with sentiments of awe and apprehension."

Is it not a legitimate inference, from the universality of these anticipations, that traditions concerning the future have accompanied those of the past? The apostle Paul tells us, that God had shewed the Gentiles that which may be known of Him. The remembrance of these manifestations of God would be transmitted from generation to generation; and this, with the evidence to be derived from the works of creation concerning His eternal power and Godhead, would leave the whole world "without excuse."

But a written revelation, while it more distinctly unfolds the glories of the future for all who, like Noah, walk with God, sends also a more solemn warning to all who, like the rest of the Antediluvians, despise "the supreme Monarch of the universe." There we read that, "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man." And that, as the word of God first created the world, and afterwards caused it to be overflowed with water, so by the same word is the earth "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

With this solemn and definite prediction concerning

the future, we turn from the traditions of men, to seek, in the book of God, a more exact record concerning man, and concerning*the Lord's dealings with man in the past, that we may escape the judgments to come, and may share all the love and all the glory of the Preserver of Noah, the Redeemer of men.

The state of the world before the flood is said to have been "corrupt," and "filled with violence." God, who is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, not only "saw that the wickedness of man was great," but that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." The corruption, confusion, and gigantic violence that prevailed, appears to have been consequent on unholy unions between the sons of God and the daughters of men. Gen. 6. 1-5, 11.
12.
Heb. 4. 12.

Some suppose the sons of God refer to rulers or judges, who ought to be sons of God, and the sin to a state of lawless violence, when men in power, "walking after their own lusts," disregarded the rights of the helpless. Others think the sons of God imply that higher order of creation, among whom Satan once and again presented himself. Others, that the sons of God describe the descendants of Seth, who had associated themselves together to call upon the name of the Lord, or to call themselves by the name of the Lord in separation from the rest of the world. The last interpretation, in connexion with the sin of their marrying the ungodly, bears with it the analogy of the Old and New Testament. For an Israelite to marry an idolatrous Gentile was sin. And against that sin Moses, Joshua, and Malachi affix the solemn penalty of sudden destruction, of perishing from the land, and being cut off Deut. 7. 3, 4.
Josh. 23. 12, 13.

Mal. 2. 11, 12.
Ezra 9 ch.;
10, 10.
Neh. 13. 23-27.

from the tabernacles of Jacob. It was a trespass against the Lord. It was profaning the holiness of the Lord. So, also, St. Paul admonishes the children of God, "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers;" and prescribes that they marry "only in the Lord."

1 Cor. 7. 39.

The essence of sin lies in disobedience to the known will of God: and as disobedience first caused the corruption of the race, it is no marvel that it should afterwards occasion its destruction.

Luke 13. 8, 9.

Whatever the sin may have been, we find the Lord had been striving with man concerning it; but the time came when He said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." For this long period the Lord would dig about his unfruitful fig-tree. And if the tree had then borne fruit, if man had repented of his sin, the story of Nineveh might have had its precursor in the history of mankind.

Gen. 6. 13, 17;
7. 17-24.

22. 1-14.

But the strivings of God's Spirit, the preaching and example of righteous Noah, were alike ineffectual. Then the Lord, in righteous indignation, vindicated the truth of His threatenings. And when the earth was rejoicing, He made it desolate. The feastings of joyous cities were suddenly interrupted by trouble and perplexity,—by the breaking down of walls,—by men slain neither by sword nor battle,—by fleeing to the house-tops,—by flying to the mountains; for the foundations of the great deep were broken up, the roaring waves of the sea obeyed their Maker's mandate, and the windows of heaven were opened. The whole earth, save one peculiar family, now drank from the Lord's hand the cup of His fury. By an overwhelming flood the world that then was perished. "All flesh died that moved

Jer. 25. 15.

upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man."

In the midst of universal sin, there was yet one man who dared to live for God. As a just and perfect man, he could have no concord or agreement with those whose thoughts were only evil, and whose ways were corrupt. He must come out from among them, and be separate. Denied the outward fellowship of man, he enjoyed the higher privilege of communion with his Maker. He walked with God. Was it presumption that he thought himself a child of God? No; he walked as a son of God. And as a tender Father the Lord communicated to him his secret. He warned Noah "of things not seen as yet;" and commanded him to build an ark for the safety of his house. The Lord at the same time gave directions concerning the length, breadth, and height of the ark, and specified the inmates who were to be preserved alive in it.

Gen. 6. 9-22;
7. 1, 5.

2 Cor. 6. 15, 18.

Heb. 11. 7.

Noah believed God; and, moved with fear, he felled the cypress and the pine; he laid the beam and plank; and as his faith was bright or dim, so would his daily toil be hastened or delayed.

When this great work was completed—when the necessary store of food was arranged in its appointed place—when Noah had done all that God commanded him to do, the Lord said unto him, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." Then was Noah to take the beast, the clean and the unclean, the fowl, and the creeping thing; for in seven days should the rain descend.

Gen. 6. 18-22.

Gen. 7. 1-4.

In this last week of the ancient world, it is possible

that the three sons of Noah may have celebrated their triple nuptial feast. (Twenty years after the judgment was predicted, the birth of his three sons changed the character of the patriarch's hopes and fears.) These sons had now attained their hundredth year, yet no child entered or left the ark. And while the marrying of the ungodly would prove their disbelief of the coming judgment, the marriage of these three sons would attest their faith in promised preservation. If this marriage-feast were the last meal in the antediluvian world, how significant would it be of that great marriage-feast which John saw in Patmos, and which yet remains in bright reality for the children of faith.

Luke 17. 26, 27.
Gen. 6, 3.
5-32.
17. 6.
Rev. 19 ch.

The last note of warning having passed, in "the self-same day" that the judgments of God were poured out, entered "Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark." "And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded Noah; and the LORD shut him in."

Then was seen by attendant angels in heaven, and by the lost spirits of earth, that great reality,—that significant blessing which rested on the man that walked with God, "who with the heart had believed unto righteousness, who, as a preacher of righteousness," had confessed with his mouth, and had become heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Rom. 10. 10.

2 Peter 2. 5.

Heb. 11. 7.

Was Noah conscious that his daily work, of building an enormous covered raft, would make known to myriads of created beings the faithfulness and the love of God; that he would be a spectacle to angels and to men to the end of time? Doubtless, not; yea, rather might his heart have sunk within him, that none heeded the words

he spoke. But let us remember, his work and ours are essentially one,—to know the voice of God, and to obey it: then to leave in His hands all foreseen and unforeseen consequences.

After a year of most memorable mercy, of covenanted Gen. 7. 11; 8. 14. safety, but not of luxurious ease, the door of the ark is opened, and Noah is commanded to go forth from it. Gen. 8. 15-19. Dry land had appeared, and Noah and his family walk forth on the renovated earth.

The builder of the ark, the preacher of righteousness, Gen. 8. 20-22. then built an altar, and offered a burnt-offering unto the Lord.

The Lord accepted the sacrifice, by granting a new Gen. 9. 1-17. covenant of blessing, and sealed it by the pledge of the oft-recurring rainbow.

This exquisitely beautiful token of the grace of God to man is afterwards seen in vision by the prophet Ezekiel, and the apostle John. The prophet relates Ezek. 1. 26-28. that he saw the likeness of a throne, and upon it the likeness of a man, and the brightness round about this man was “as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain. And the apostle saw a throne, Rev. 4. 2, 3. “and one sat on the throne and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” He also saw the Mighty Angel, the Lord Rev. 10. 1. Jesus Christ, “whose face was as it were the sun,” “and a rainbow was upon His head.” Is it in vain that we associate this external token of grace given to Noah with the external appearance of glory upon the head, or round about the person and the throne of Him, who is to us the manifestation of the exceeding riches of the Eph. 2. 7. grace of God? We believe not. Yea, rather we believe

that "the God of all grace" has associated them together for us. For He appointed the beautiful symbol of the covenant with Noah to be also a luminous representation of the beauty which surrounds the person of His Son.

John 15. 5.

The life of Noah presents to us a forcible illustration of the words of the Lord Jesus: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." It is true, the souls of the antediluvians were not saved by his preaching, but the souls of all the successive people of God, from that time to this, owe their existence to the great fact, that Noah walked with God. He who abides in Jesus must necessarily walk with God. Whatever be his outward position among men, the secret principles of his daily life must be identical with the principles which guided the daily life of this great patriarch. For time and for eternity, then, may he who so walks with God count on the great recompence of the reward, the much fruit which, according to the word of the Lord, shall result from the secret life of faith and obedience.

Gen. 9. 20-22.

In the midst of our own daily frailties, we may further take warning from the life of Noah. When he had long trod the renovated earth, when he might have thought the conflict with sin was passed, he then felt its deep taint within. He partook too largely of the earthly blessings so freely granted. He drank of the new wine of his vineyard, and he was drunken.

HAM.

Ham the father of Canaan covered not his father's shame.

The curse of the Lord was again pronounced on Gen. 9. 24, 25. offending man, now by the voice of the great patriarch and priest on his own son: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren."

This curse was recorded during the forty years in Exodo. which Moses and the children of Israel lived in the expectation of driving the Canaanites out of the promised land. And to men under these circumstances, how much more important was the curse as it affected Canaan, than as it had respect to the other children of Ham. They were then taught, that in taking possession of the land of Canaan, not only the promise to Abraham, but a greater curse than that foretold on Canaan would be fulfilled by them.

Later ages have witnessed the destruction of Tyre and Carthage, which were also descended from Canaan; and the more extended curse in the national servitude of Egypt, and in the cruel slave trade of the western coast of Africa. From whom arises the well-known plea, "Am I not a man and a brother?" Is it not from the outcast and injured sons of him who was to be the servant, not the brother of his brethren?

If this curse on Canaan and on Ham may be traced in succeeding generations, for some thousand years, who shall limit the curse pronounced on those who succour not the despised ones among the brethren of Matt. 25. 41-46. Christ, whether they be descended from Ham, or from the more favoured Shem?

No word of mercy was intimated in this prophecy; yet some may account it a blessing that the great kingdoms of Egypt and Assyria, and the renowned cities of Tyre and Carthage, should for so long a period shed the lustre of earthly glory on the sons of Ham.

But a far greater glory rests on very many of this race. Rahab, the harlot, Ebedmelech, the Ethiopian, and the eunuch of Candace have proved that the children of Ham may by faith become the children of the most high God. They sought the Lord, and He was found of them. They trusted in Him, and He delivered them. And in more recent days a countless multitude of the sons and daughters of Ham, notwithstanding the bondage of man, have likewise through faith been received into the family of God, and have enjoyed a new brotherhood in Christ. And, as the Lord's brethren, they will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. A still further blessing rests upon them; for whosoever blesses them shall be blessed,—whosoever has ministered to their wants, will receive the same reward as if they had administered to the Lord himself. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Josh. 2;
6, 25;
Jer. 38. 7-13;
39. 15-18;
Acts 8. 27-39.

Psa. 91;
34. 4.

Gal. 3. 13-28.

Matt. 12. 50.

8. 11.

25. 40.

SHEM.

Gen. 9. 26.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

Thus was the name of God and man united in the blessing on Shem. And until Christ came, in whom both the name and the nature of God and man were united and were blessed, the larger number of the worshippers of the true God were found among the descendants of Shem. By a long posterity of holy patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings, the family of Shem was truly blessed, and the name of Jehovah was known among men.

JAPHETH.

The Lord gave to Japheth a promise of enlargement or progress. "God shall enlarge Japheth, or according to the margin, persuade Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." Gen. 9. 27. Since the Christian era, the history of Europe presents most remarkable facts of enlargement and proselytism. The vast hordes of Goths and Huns in the earlier ages have become a proverb. And it is well known, that the great continent of America has for centuries been receiving the surplus population of Europe. But the great continent of the West does not suffice for this enlargement; the great islands of the East must also receive the increased family of Japheth. And we also see a British India spreading the tents of Shem over the Anglo-Saxon sons of Japheth; and while actuated by parental responsibility, a British father seeks for his son a home and honourable toil in distant India, he is perhaps unconscious that he is fulfilling a promise and a prophecy given by our forefather Noah four or five thousand years ago. Thus, by the free agency of man, the decrees of God are unconsciously fulfilled. And we also find, that among the inhabitants of the world the larger number of those who have been persuaded or proselyted to the worship of the true God, and of His Son Jesus Christ, have been of the family of Japheth.

These facts concerning the descendants of the three sons of Noah are so open to observation, that he who runs may read them in the past and present history of the world.

If these short sayings concerning blessing in connection with one man, enlargement or persuasion respecting

John 3. 36.

another, and servitude, instead of brotherhood, relating to a third, are still being fulfilled; shall not the short saying of John, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," be as surely and as largely fulfilled?

Book I.

CHAPTER VI.

"Two several lovers built two several cities: the love of God buildeth a Jerusalem; the love of the world buildeth a Babylon. Let every man inquire of himself what he loveth, and he shall resolve himself of whence he is a citizen."

ST. AUGUSTINE.

Book I.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TOWER OF BABEL — CONTRAST BETWEEN THE ARK AND
THE TOWER—THE JUDGMENT AND MERCY OF THE LORD.

IN the path of patient toil, of singularity and solitude of soul, Noah had reared the ark. And in this work of his own hands, with his gathered family, and vast possessions around him, he floated safely and grandly on the flood. But the safety, the success, the grandeur of the whole lay in the principle of obedience to the Word of God—in faith on the Word of God.

In another part of Holy Writ, we read of a king of Babylon, who said in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Do we not perceive a kindred spirit between this king of Babylon and the men of Shinar, when they said one to another, "Come, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." They had not, like Noah, to work alone; for the multi-

tude confederated together to build a tower, and this tower hath been the world's old monument of self-appointed safety, of pride, of unbelief, and of human centralization, in defiance of the will or the Word of the Most High.

But the Lord soon frustrated this ingenious purpose of concentration. He said, "Let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth."

Gen. 11. 5-9.

From that time diversity of speech has considerably caused the separation and alienation of mankind. And when great Babylon, built on the foundation of Babel, shall come in remembrance before God, to receive the cup of His wrath, there will be another scattering, one of islands, and of mountains; for every island will flee away, and the mountains will not be found.

Rev. 6. 14;
16. 19, 20.

As in the doom of labour we may see the mercy of the Lord, so in this dispersion. The mutually reflecting influence of evil was lessened; personal responsibility was enhanced, and an individual return toward God was facilitated.

When the Holy Spirit the Comforter came, He made himself known among men, by enabling the apostles to speak with other tongues than their own; and thus the judgment which came on all the earth by the sin of the founders of Babylon, was revoked at Jerusalem.

Zep. 3. 8, 9.

A still larger revocation is foretold, when universal blessing shall extinguish every curse. Then, they who are emphatically called "the people," will receive a pure language, in which they may call upon the name

of the Lord, and serve Him with one consent. Then PRO. 18. 10.
it will be clearly seen that the name of the Lord is, and
ever has been, the only strong tower in which the
righteous can find safety.

"HOLY, holy, holy! all the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who wast, and art, and evermore shalt be.

"Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea:
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and Mighty!
God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity!"

HEBER.

Book I.

CHAPTER VII.

ASTONISHMENT OF ANGELS AT THE SIN OF MAN AND AT THE MERCY OF THE LORD.

THE ears of man have heard the host of heaven, saying,
"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good Luke 2. 14.
will toward men." And the eyes of man have seen the Isa. 6. 1, 2.
seraphim covering their face and their feet with wings,
and with wings ready to fly at the bidding of their
triune Jehovah. Rev. 4. 8.
John 12. 36-41.
Acts 26. 25-27.

If such their tribute of praise, and if such their
readiness to honour and obey, what astonishment, what Jer. 2. 12.
indignation, must they feel at the disobedience and the
violence of man! If we could hear the heavenly hosts
recounting to each other the first story of man on earth,
would not their thoughts be conveyed in accents such
as these?

And is it so, that man but newly created in the
image of his Maker, and pronounced by the great
Architect of heaven and earth to be very good, supplied
with everything to render him happy, entirely depend-
ent on his Creator, and holding daily communion with
Him; is it possible that he should have disregarded so
slight a test of his obedience, and have become a rebel

against the behests of the Almighty? Astounding folly! madness incomprehensible! O unworthy occupant of such a paradise! O unworthy companion of such a Deity! Is he permitted to live? He is. And more than that, his merciful Creator gives him a promise, that his seed shall bruise the head of his tempter.

Man lives. He has children in his own likeness. His life is granted on a new tenure; yet his first-born son kills his brother. His children multiply. Some call on the name of the Lord. One walks with God: but heaven, not earth, is his home; and in token of His love, God takes him to himself.

The earth is filled with violence. Terrific sight! Will not our great Creator blot it from the universe? No; He is all-wise and merciful, as well as just. The wicked are destroyed, but the earth is cleansed, and there is one righteous man saved.

For sin, the world is overwhelmed with water, and one family is riding on the destroying element. Surely that family will believe in God's hatred of sin, in the certain consequences of His wrath, and in the unspeakable blessedness of His love.

Alas! sin, that evil principle, appears again. The father transgresses. The son makes it known; and from a father's lips the curse precedes the blessing.

The children of Noah, the saved one, multiply. They believe that wrath will follow sin. They think to defy that wrath, by building a tower that shall reach to heaven. Presumptuous thought! Are they stronger than God? are they wiser than God? Let heaven and earth bear witness to His almighty power and love; let them know that every purpose of the Lord has hitherto been performed, and yet "shall be performed." Tell them, that their prolonged existence, after such multi-

plied transgression, is itself a proof of His long-suffering mercy.

Oh, that we might ourselves speak to them, and tell them how their every act of filial obedience, how every out-gushing of holy reverence, how every heart-entwining sympathy with their God, and our God, fills us with intensest joy. Oh, that they knew with what desire we long to search into the mysteries of their redemption; how swiftly we must one day fly, at their Maker's bidding, to gather out for destruction those who offend, those whom we would now warn to flee from evil, and win to the paths of everlasting love. Oh, that they might now hear the sound of the trumpet, which at the great day shall awaken even the dead, and before its last echoes shall have died away, shall speed us forth, to "gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Another voice is heard, "BEHOLD and wonder!" "Be still, and know that I am God!"

Gen. 17. 27-27;

Is. 1. 2.

Rev. 7. 11-15.

Luke 22. 43;

24. 4-7.

Luke 15. 10.

1 Peter 1. 12.

1 Cor. 4. 9.

Matt. 13. 41, 42.

Gen. 19. 15-17.

Heb. 1. 14.

Rev. 8. 4.

Dan. 12. 2.

John 5. 25.

1 Cor. 15. 52.

Matt. 24. 31.

Rev. 7. 1, 2.

Psa. 46. 10.

"I HEAR the accuser roar
Of ills that I have done;
I know them well, and thousands more;
Jehovah findeth none.

"Sin, Satan, death, press near,
To harass and appall;
Let but my bleeding Lord appear,
Backward they go and fall."

S. W. GANDY.

THE DAYSMAN.

"TILL God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just, and sacred Three,
Are terrors to my mind."

WATTS.

Book II.

CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORY OF JOB.

Man a witness for God—Job's uprightness—Satan's malice—Job's controversy with Satan—His self-abhorrence before God—His double blessing—The effect of trial in heightening joy—Our own position before God—Limits of Satan's power—Leviathan an emblem of Satan—Job an early and a prolonged witness for God.

THE created world around us, yea, even a fruitful season, is a witness for the goodness of the Lord our God. But Jehovah has a higher witness for himself than sun and moon; or summer and winter; or fire, snow, or stormy wind. Man, created in His own image, must be the witness of His justice and mercy, of His holiness and His love.

Rom. 1. 19, 20.
Acta 14. 17.

Jer. 31. 35.
Gen. 8. 22.
Psa. 148. 8.

And all that is in man, whether of good or evil, has served, and will still serve, to manifest in bright effulgence the holiness and the excellency, or the various moral perfections of the Lord our God. Not only the good and the evil of man, but, as we have seen in Paradise, even the malice of Satan is subservient to this one high purpose of the Lord our God, that His name should be magnified throughout the world.

In the book of Job, we are further permitted to see the entire defeat of the great enemy, in his attempt to

dishonour God through the medium of His favoured servant Job.

For, by the faith, the patience, and the self-abasement of Job,—by the height of human enjoyment from which he was suddenly cast, into the depths of human suffering, and from which he was again raised to redoubled blessings, God was magnified in him; and the testimony of this patriarchal priest and prophet for the sovereignty and majesty of God was borne up to the courts of heaven, and far and wide to the generation of men around him. And his voice is still heard

Job 13. 15, 16; through the long vista of ages, proclaiming his trust
33. 4; in God as his salvation, his knowledge of the Holy
19. 25, 26; Spirit as his Creator, his faith both in a living Redeemer, and in the resurrection of the body; and his
23. 12. delight in the words of God, which he esteemed more than his necessary food.

It is interesting to remember, that in the series of witnesses for the Lord, Adam heard the voice of God announce the promise, that the head of the serpent should be bruised,—that in the days of Enos men began to call on the name of the Lord,—that Enoch “walked with God,”—and that Noah was “a preacher of righteousness.”

And as the only events of man’s history referred to in the book of Job are the fall of Adam and the flood, we presume we are following the chain of the narrative, by placing the history of Job between the dispersion of mankind and the call of Abraham. From this ancient witness for God, we now desire to gather some lessons for the present, and to strengthen our hopes for the future.

When the sons of God “came to present themselves before the Lord,” “Satan came also among them.”

Job 1.

He had been "going to and fro in the earth," and had been "walking up and down in it."

In the land of Uz, he had seen a man named Job. "That man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil." The Almighty was Job 29. with him. His children were about him, feasting in brotherly and in sisterly kindness. He "was a father to the poor." The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him. He "dwelt as a king in the army;" yet He was "as one that comforteth the mourners." And so greatly was he honoured, that "princes refrained from talking," and nobles held their peace in his presence. He numbered his sheep and his camels by thousands, his yoke of oxen and his asses by hundreds: "so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east." And from his flocks and herds he continually offered burnt-offerings, according to the number of his family.

The Lord asked Satan if he had considered this: His 1. 8-10. servant Job. Satan had seen him, and appeared to know the extent of his wealth, when he said, "Doth Job serve God for nought?"

Thus would Satan, "the accuser of the brethren," Rev. 12. 10. have despoiled Job of his good name.

But Job's meek endurance of afflictions has rendered his name a perpetual proverb, by which to exemplify James 5. 11. patience.

Satan not only imputed the goodness of Job to a Job 1. 10-19. gratified covetousness, but suggested that, if the Lord would put forth His hand, and touch all he had, Job would curse Him to His face. The Lord permitted

him to deprive Job of all his possessions, and of all his beloved children.

Then Job said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

2 ch. Thus foiled, Satan renewed his attack, saying, "But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face."

30. 30; And Satan "smote Job with sore boils from the sole
7. 5 of his foot unto his crown," until his skin was black and broken, and his bones were burned with heat. Moreover, the adversary was permitted to touch Job's wife, and to use her influence in order to induce the holy man to curse God.

But it was unavailing; for Job replied to her, "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?"

6. 15-21; In these overwhelming calamities, his brethren, his
19. 13-15. sisters, and his acquaintances, forsook him; nevertheless, three friends, more faithful than the rest, came to weep and mourn with him, and they sat in silent grief for seven days and seven nights. But when they opened
2. 11-13. their lips, they did not speak the thing that was right concerning God: and the afflicted patriarch found them
48. 7. to be "physicians of no value," and such "miserable comforters," that they appeared to him to mock his grief.

13. 4.
16. 2.
21. 3.

To these friends who had not forgotten him, Job poured out the sorrows of his heart. He mourned the day of his birth, and expressed his longing for death. To them at one time he spoke out his confidence in his

own integrity, saying, "Thou knowest that I am not wicked." "Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." At other times he confessed that man could not be just with God, saying, "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." "For He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any days-man betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." And again, "How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin."

These words indicate a fluctuating between confidence in himself, and a true knowledge of the holiness of God. They were spoken when he had heard of God "by the hearing of the ear." But when, at last, he saw the Lord, he abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes.

Herein was Satan again baffled; for instead of cursing God and exalting himself, as he had expected, Job ascribed all honour to God, and abhorred himself. Then, like the publican in the parable, he was justified by God. And not only was he justified, but his prayers were heard for his three friends. Like Peter, after he had been sifted by Satan, he strengthened his brethren. And when Job prayed for his three friends, the Lord turned his captivity, and gave him twice as much as he had before.

"Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all

the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning." The number of his sheep and camels, and oxen, and asses, were doubled; and "he had also seven sons and three daughters." Doubtless, he offered sacrifices for these sons and daughters, and that his fourteen sons and six daughters would be to him a two-fold resurrection blessing.

Though Job penetrated the deepest depths of human woe, he also experienced a height of blessedness enjoyed by few; for he concentrated in himself all the blessings of the first and of the second covenant. The Lord twice rejoiced over him, to make him plenteous in the fruit of his body, in the fruit of his cattle, and in the fruit of his land for good. And according to the new dispensation, from enduring chastisement, he had the blessing, and the evidence of sonship; and since he endured temptation, there is promised for him "a crown of life" "that fadeth not away."

Deut. 28. 2, 11.

Heb. 12. 7.

*Jas. 1. 12.
1 Peter 5. 4.*

The experience of a modern saint of God may further teach us how the trials of Job may, even by the force of contrast, have inspired a new or keener sense of after-enjoyment. Dr. Judson, the well-known missionary to Burmah, once claimed for himself a capability of deriving enjoyment from outward objects, above that of the friends by whom he was surrounded. The incident he cited as imparting such pre-eminent delight was, "floating down the Irrawadi on a cool, moonlight evening, with his wife by his side, and his baby in his arms, free, all free." "But," he added, "you cannot understand it; it needs a twenty-one months' qualification; and I can never regret my twenty-one months of misery, when I recollect that one delicious thrill. I think I have a

better appreciation of what heaven may be ever since."

The increased sense of enjoyment which Job experienced on the second bestowment of property, friends, and children has not been recorded for our instruction; but, doubtless, in this respect Job and Judson were "men of like passions," and from the happiness of the one, we may infer the intense joy which the other experienced after the endurance of so great temptations and trials; and if the capability of earthly enjoyment was so much increased by the power of contrast, how greatly will the unalloyed, the perfect and the permanent, enjoyment of heaven be enhanced by the remembrance of the trials of earth!

We see in the history of Job the difference between the position of a man among men, and the position of that same man in the immediate presence of God: and from it we would learn to estimate ourselves, not as we are among men, but as we shall see ourselves when in the visible presence of the living God.

God had said of Job, "There is none like him in the earth." And against him Satan brought no charge of evil doing, no omissions of duty, either to God or to his neighbour; he could only imply, that though Job served God, it was not from love or reverence, but for reward. This mere implication of motive, in the absence of all positive charge of evil, was, from Satan, pre-eminent praise.

If one whom God pronounced perfect and upright among men, whom Satan left unscathed, must repent and abhor himself, when in the presence of God; what will be our position before Him, what our feelings, when we see the Lord "face to face?"

If we are then arrayed only in some fancied goodness

- of our own, we shall call on the rocks to hide us from His presence. But, if then clothed in the righteousness of Christ, we shall find ourselves complete and perfect in Him. While it is the joy of angels to honour their Maker, to obey His voice, and to do good to man, it is the work of the Evil One to dishonour God, and to do ill to man. Having seen in what lies the weakness of man, and in whom lies his strength, we may also, from this controversy, form some estimate of the power of Satan on earth, and of the limits assigned to his power.For, thanks be to God, his power is limited by God's supreme authority, and by the permitted limit of man's resistance. If we resist, he will flee; and we are assured of his ultimate defeat: for the day will come when the old serpent, the devil, shall be bound, and after a thousand years there will be another day, when he shall be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are; into that lake into which hell itself will ultimately be cast.
- In the book of Job, in which the personality and power of Satan are so vividly portrayed, there is also a remarkable description of a creature called leviathan. From the prophet Isaiah, we learn that leviathan is a crooked serpent, and is capable of suffering punishment. A serpent was the form by which Satan was first known on earth, and it is his descriptive appellation in the visions of "things which shall be hereafter." Further, the leviathan is called by the Lord "a king over all the children of pride:" and that pride was "the condemnation of the devil," we gather from the words of St. Paul. If then leviathan, the king of pride, may be considered a material emblem of Satan, may we not gather instruction from these questions asked respecting this powerful
- Rev. 6. 16.
Col. 2. 10.
James 4. 7.
Rev. 20. 2, 10-14.
Job 41.
Isa. 27. 1.
Rev. 12. 9;
20. 2.
1 Tim. 3. 6.

creature? "Will he make a covenant with thee? Wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?" "Shall not one be cast down, even at the sight of him?" And may we not ask these same questions respecting Satan? And must we not reply? If I should hold intercourse with him, he would submit to no restraint or covenant with me. No outward fascinations shall tempt me to play or to parley with Satan. But if I am safe-shielded under the wings of Jesus, I will not fear nor be cast down at the sight of him. If I flee to Jesus, my flight must be successful. If He fights, He conquers, and in Him I also conquer.

In the history of Job, we have seen what man is, what Satan is, and what the Lord shews himself to be, as a bountiful rewarder of them that fear Him; and by observing the effect of His presence on His perfect servant, we have drawn some inferences concerning the holiness of the Lord our God. But who shall fully declare His holiness, His majesty, His jealous supremacy, His long-suffering, kindness, and patience toward the children of men?

By glorifying this great and holy God, by calling upon Him and trusting Him in the day of trouble, Job, in this early period of the world's history, answered one chief purpose of his creation. And while, by the record of his life, he still testifies for God on earth, he may have joined, or he will ere long join, "the company of heaven, to laud and magnify the glorious Name of God, evermore praising Him, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts; heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most High." Amen.

Psa. 50. 15.
Job 13. 15.
Assembly's
Catechism.

Communion
Service.

“He calls a worm his friend,
He calls himself my God;
And He shall save me to the end,
Through Jesu's blood.”

OLIVER.

“Who would share Abraham's blessing,
Must Abraham's path pursue;
A stranger and a pilgrim,
Like him, must journey through.”

PAUL GERHARDT.

Book II.

CHAPTER II.

THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM.

Expectation induces preparation—Abram's earthly position—God's command—Abram's obedience—King Uruk—Extent of the fame of Abraham—Heathenism claiming descent from him—Separation from his family—Abram's journey—Famine—Egypt—Return to Bethel—Lot departs—The promise renewed—The promise contrary to appearances—War with the kings—Melchisedec—A voice and a vision—Hagar—Ishmael and his descendants—Change of name—Circumcision—Three visitors—Conference concerning Sodom—Two angels rescue Lot—Fire from heaven—Desolation of Sodom—Lot's daughters—Their descendants—Abraham visits Gerar—Consequences—Isaac born—Ishmael banished—Isaac offered in sacrifice—Sarah's death and burial—Abraham's death and burial—The faith of Abraham—His righteousness—His works the proof of it—The friend of God—Friendships—Lazarus—Jesus, His disciples, His friends—Uruk and his wealth forgotten, Abraham and his faith remembered—Those who have not faith may ask for it.

So general is the expectation of going to heaven after death, that it will be the rare exception if this book should fall into the hand of any one who does not either expect, as a matter of course, or desire, as the one great object of life, to be with the Redeemer in His kingdom, and there to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In the ordinary affairs of life, our expectations of the future guide our conduct in the present. A true anticipation has its preparation according to the measure of its importance. Whether for the companionship of a

festival, or for the government of a kingdom, some pre-fitting or pre-fitness is usually required.

Matt. 8. 11. So, in the inspired record, the children of Abraham
Ro. 4. 3, 11, 12. —those who shall sit with him in the kingdom of
Heb. 5. 9. heaven—are those who believe the word of God, and obey it.

If then we expect to sit with Abraham in heaven, and to reign with the Lord Jesus in His kingdom, shall we not, while reading the life of the patriarch, cast a reflecting thought on our own hearts and lives, to see what impress they bear of our professed anticipations? In this reflective glance, it is a consolation to remember that the high position of Abraham, as the friend of God, was not the result of his outward circumstances, but of his faithful adherence to principles the most simple, the observance of which is essential to every child of God, whatever be his position in society.

He was a shepherd, a wanderer with his flocks and herds, not encumbered with the luxuries of life; yet in respect of wealth and power he was a prince.

In early life he was surrounded by idolatry; and, if he did not yield to its temptations, he must have known their power. For temples were then built to the sun and moon, and to the memory of their great ancestor Noah—temples so massive in their structure, that their foundations still exist, though nearly four thousand years have rolled away since they were laid by the hand of man. But from all connection with idolatry God had called Abram, by saying, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that

Gen. 12. 1-3.

curseth thee : and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

"And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife ; and they went forth from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan ; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there."

It is remarkable, that in lower Mesopotamia, two places, Mugeyer and Warka, which have at different times been fixed on as the birth-place of Abraham, have each the remains of a temple dedicated to the worship of the moon. They were both built by king Uruk, who appears to have anticipated undying fame from inscribing his name and his deeds on bricks and cylinders. These inscriptions being now read and interpreted, shew the specific temptations to which Abram was in all probability subjected.

*Travels and
Researches
in Assyria
and Chaldea.
By Loftus.*

In every age, men of every grade of capacity have been influenced by the external. These temples of idolatry had in them the external marks of reason, power, and permanence. They must have been erected by a king who could command a multitude of men not required to till the soil or tend the herd, and who in various ways must have been capable of swaying the minds of men around him.

In obeying the word of the Lord, and in refusing to bow down before these idolatrous altars, Abram, in this tenth generation from the flood, must have stood as much alone as Noah, in the tenth generation from the creation. It was then in great mercy that the Lord called him away from such a country. And who shall describe the blessing entailed on Abram and on the world, by his obedience to the command of God, in leaving the scene of his temptations ! The name of the powerful

king has for centuries been unknown, and now owes its chief interest to the man who refused to bow down before his stupendous works, while this man Abram, who left no monument of brass or of brick, has filled the world with his fame.

And while his name has, from that time to this, been a word of power, giving birth, from the principles associated with it, to like acts of faith and obedience, it has also, even where these principles have been departed from, commanded such an universal reverence, "that the ancient Persians, the Hindoos, the Lacedemonians, and the Arabians, have at various times united with the Jews, in celebrating his name, and declaring that their religion in its purity was the religion of Abraham." And if Brahama be another name for Abraham, we see a further illustration of the truth, that "the body without the spirit is dead," and that when life ceases, corruption follows.

John 8. 39.

Townsend.

James 2. 26.

But the extent of this fame of Abraham is leading us away from the consideration of the path of self-denial in which he was commanded to walk. He was not only called to leave his country, but his kindred also; and from the few details we have concerning them, the latter part of the command appears more remarkable than the first part. For the God whom Abraham worshipped was also worshipped by Nahor, who remained in Mesopotamia, as well as by Terah, who set out for Haran, or for Canaan. Beside the union of principle in the worship of the true God, the family of Terah were united together in the strictest bonds of family affection, as their intermarriages, which were then permitted, plainly prove. For Abram married Sarah, who was his half-sister or half-niece, and his brother Nahor married the daughter of their elder brother Haran.

Gen. 31. 53.

This family union was so perpetuated, that the holy seed continued in the posterity of Terah, and conjointly in that of his three sons, for four generations. For Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarai, married Rebecca the grand-daughter of Nahor, and great-grand-daughter of Haran; and Jacob found two wives in the same line of descent. But, though they all worshipped the one true God, the Lord saw separation to be necessary. For it was not till after the death of Terah that Abram entered the promised land; nor till after his separation from Lot the son of Haran, that he, who had been called to leave his kindred as well as his country, enjoyed the most exalted communion with his God. The whole life of Abram is a commentary on this command.

After the death of his father Terah, Abram proceeded on his journey. In a direct line from Warka or Mugeyer, leaving Haouran on the north, Abram would enter Canaan by the valley of the Jabbok. The only direction for his journey left on record was that he was to go to a land that the Lord would shew him. Doubtless, the Lord had led him every step of his journey; but it might have been by a way that he knew not until its last stage, when faith was turned to sight. Then, from an eminence on the north of Jabbok, he might distinctly see "Lebanon, the sea of Galilee, Esdraelon in its full extent, Carmel, the Mediterranean, and the whole range of Judah and Ephraim." A modern traveller says, "It is the finest view I ever saw in any part of the world."

Acts 7. 4.

Stanley's Sinai
and Palestine.

Abraham entered the land, and passed through it, "unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain (or trees) of Moreh;" and there, in the centre of the glorious land,

Gen. 12. 6, 7.

the Lord met him, "and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him."

Ex. 20. 24, 25. This altar of earth, or of unhewn stones, when outwardly contrasted with the great temple of Uruk, might be deemed most insignificant; but its true value as much exceeded the massive temple, as the value of eternity exceeds that of time, as spirit excels matter.

Gen. 12. 10. The Lord had graciously acknowledged the arrival of Abram in his appointed land, yet a trial often known to the household of faith, even the scarcity of daily bread, visited the patriarch and his family.

Gen. 12. 10-13. The faith of Abram now failed. Yet he would not return to Mesopotamia, for God had called him from it: but he sought another earthly refuge, and went to sojourn in Egypt. There, the attractions of sense, or of symbolism, more subtle than those he had encountered in Mesopotamia, probably led his thoughts away from that invisible God on whom he had trusted. Certain it is, his faith forsook him; and to preserve the life on which such large promises depended, he desired Sarai to relinquish the covenant-bond of marriage, and to claim alone the relationship which had previously existed between them.

But the Lord "suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, He reproveth kings for their sakes." Because of Sarai, Abram's wife, the Lord plagued Pharaoh and all his house with great plagues.

Will Pharaoh alone receive the intimation of the Lord's displeasure? We think not; for we afterwards read that the Lord said to Abram, "Know of a surety

that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." Before hearing this unwelcome prophecy, "a horror of great darkness fell upon Abram." Might not that be occasioned by this sin coming to his remembrance? The Lord afterwards said to the children of Abram, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help," and would He leave unproved the like act in Abram their father? Since the children of Israel received blessings from the faith of Abram, may they not also have received chastisements through his unbelief?

The heathen king having sent him away from Egypt, which had been his false confidence, Abram returned to the oak at Moreh, "Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord." The blessing of the Lord had been seen in the tents of Abram; for his flocks and herds, and those of his nephew Lot, had become so numerous, that they could no longer dwell together. To prevent all strife for the occupation of a territory, his by the unfailing promise of God, Abram ceded to his nephew the choice of all the land.

After he had thus shewn that his heart was not set upon his earthly treasures, the Lord appeared to Abram, and renewed to him the covenant of the land and of a numerous seed. He directed the patriarch to lift up his eyes, and to look from the place where he was, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward. From this "mountain east of Bethel," he would command "one of those wide views or surveys which abound in the land of Palestine." He was to walk through the

land; through the length and the breadth of it; for the Lord would give it to him. The Lord afterwards more clearly defined the extent of this territory, as from "the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates;" even to the river whence, by the command of God, he had departed.

How large, to the apprehension of Abram, this territory would appear, we may gather from the contemporary facts concerning the sub-division of the country into many petty kingdoms. Canaan comprehended Gen. 14. 1-17. seven nations; the vale of Siddim had its five kings; and the valley of the Euphrates at least four, one of whom is called King of Nations. And Abram's faith in the promises of God must have been further tried, by contrasting the warlike tendencies of these nations with his own peaceful disposition. That four kings of the Euphrates should unite together to cross the Syrian desert, to subdue five kings in the fertile valley of Sodom, and that one of those kings should for twelve years rule over these distant nations, and, after their revolt, again reduce them to subjection, and despoil them of all their goods, would, to the eye of reason, render the fulfilment of these promises impossible. The man of faith saw these contentions for his promised inheritance, yet took no part in the strife, until he saw among the prisoners his nephew Lot, and in the spoil the goods of the righteous.

When Abram heard that his brother Lot was taken captive, he armed his servants, pursued, and smote the conquerors. Had he, through timid, calculating cautiousness, disobeyed the word of the Lord, and remained in the land of Shinar, he might have followed as a vassal in the train of the invaders. Now, as a conqueror, not

only is his own soul delivered, but his erring brother is freed from captivity; his goods, and those of his heathen companions, are restored.

These warlike kings must also have learnt, that the God whom Abram served was greater in power, and in the attribute of love was altogether distinct from the gods whom they served.

By going out to meet the man of God, and by presenting to him all the goods he had taken, the king of Sodom acknowledged the benefit which he had received from him. But from this heathen prince, Abram would receive no reward. He was the Lord's servant.

Yet Abram had the heart of a man, and after this temptation to worldly wealth, he needed strength from the Lord. And the Lord appeared to him in the person of Melchisedek, "King of righteousness" and "King of peace," the priest of the most high God. This king also went out to meet Abram, and brought for his refreshment bread and wine. "And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand."

Gen. 14. 18-20

Heb. 7. 1-21.

Outward peace had been restored, yet there was an aching void felt in the heart of Abraham. He had no seed, one born in his house was his heir. "And the Lord came unto Abram in a vision," saying, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." This timely assurance of the Lord's mercies disclosed the forebodings of the patriarch's heart. His gathering fears, respecting the future heir of his house, were uttered only to be quelled by a more distinct expression of the loving-kindness of his God.

Psa. 139. 1-4.

Gen. 15.

The Lord "brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward the heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and He said unto him, "So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and He accounted it to him for righteousness." Yet Abram asked for some further confirmation of his faith; the Lord appointed a sacrifice, and granted his request.

Isa. 6. 5.
Job 42. 5, 6.
John 16. 8.

2Sam. 12. 1-14.

"And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him." That horror of great darkness, may have been caused by the presence of that pure and holy Being, who, by the brightness of His countenance, reveals the hidden evils of man's heart. The length of time which had passed since the visit of Abram to Egypt does not preclude the possibility that that sin was then brought to his remembrance; for in the case of David, nearly a twelvemonth elapsed ere the Lord opened his eyes to see his sin. The prophecy respecting the bondage in Egypt, which has already been referred to, was then given to the patriarch.

But mercy, the sure mercy of God, was also made known to him. The sacrifice of Abram was accepted; and on this eventful day, the Lord made a new covenant with Abram, and more exactly defined the boundary line of his future possessions.

Gen. 16. 1-4.

From not being specially named in the promised blessing, Sarah distrusted the love of God towards herself. She now sought help from Egypt, and gave to her husband her bondmaid from that land of spiritual darkness.

Family disquietude, as a necessary consequence, followed this act of unbelief. To Hagar's altered feelings, servitude had become hard, so hard that she fled from it. The angel of the Lord found the wanderer, and commanded her to return to her mistress. Gen. 16. 5-9.

The angel of the Lord then comforted her, saying "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude." Gen. 16. 10-13

He directed her to name the child Ishmael, or "God shall hear," and told her that his hand would be against every man, and every man's hand against him; yet he should dwell in the presence of his brethren. Thus, the desolate bond-woman heard from the lips of the angel of the Lord, some prophetic characteristics of her own seed for above three thousand years. We, after the lapse of these three thousand years, may with wonder think over the fulfilment of these few words of prophecy. We may look into the history of surrounding nations, as they successively gloried in conquest and supposed universal dominion, but we shall continually find the numerous and independent sons of Ishmael bidding defiance to their arms. Instead of conquering Arabia, Sesostris was content to defend Egypt from the incursions of the Arabs. To the Assyrians they were not subjects, but enemies. Cyrus could not reduce them to the condition of tributaries, but considered them as friends. Of Alexander it is said, "The Arabs alone disdained to acknowledge the conqueror, or to take any notice of him." Pompey, Trajan, and Severus, each in his turn, attempted the conquest of the sons of Ishmael; and though some temporary advantage might be gained, they could never entirely subdue them. In later days, the wide-spreading conquests of the Saracens are too

Newton and
Keith on the
Prophecies.

well known to need recounting; and at this present time, they not only subsist unconquered, and in the words of Gibbon, "armed against mankind," but after being for ages surrounded by polished and luxurious nations, the primitive wildness of their race remains unaltered.

Hagar knew nothing of these great adversaries which her children would have to encounter, and over whom their arms would prove victorious. It was not necessary that she should fill up the details of the angel's announcement; but if, in her state of loneliness and subjection, she could believe it, her joy of faith would triumph over the sorrows of the day.

So, we know not the particulars of coming trials or of the future glory; but we know that all who trust in the word of the living God will be more than conquerors over all their spiritual enemies; and that they will join the innumerable company of angels in worshipping Him who made himself known to the desolate one. And as the Ishmaelites exist to this day a free and independent people, so every word of the Lord will be fulfilled.

Gal. 4. 24, 25.

The apostle Paul conveys to us another lesson from the history of Hagar. He tells us that this Egyptian bond-woman was typical of "Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage." Whether the covenant of the law was a special adaptation to the spirit of bondage, in which Israel in Egypt was reared, we presume not to say. But the first sojourn in Egypt was not of faith; the child Ishmael was not the child of faith: "the law was not of faith." They severally proclaim reproof and subjection; while Canaan, Isaac, and the new covenant breathe forth the spirit of rest, and love, and intimate communion.

Gal. 3. 12.

Abram looked upon the son of Hagar the bond-
woman, as the child which God had promised: and, Gen. 16. 15.
according to the word of the angel, he named him 17.
Ishmael. And when the Lord promised him another
son by Sarah, he said, "O that Ishmael might live
before thee!"

But the Lord had reserved the better promises for
the child born according to His own appointment; and
when Ishmael was thirteen years of age, He renewed to
Abram and to his unborn posterity the covenant of
blessing, adding the significant injunction, "Walk before
me, and be thou perfect." This may have referred to
his going to Egypt, and his not walking uprightly when
denying his wife.

The faith that had been tried regarding the fulfilment
of an oft-repeated covenant, was now to be strengthened
by the appointment of two outward tokens. An antici-
pation of the promised seed was henceforth continually
to sound in the ears of the patriarch; he was from that
time to be called Abraham, the father of a great multi-
tude; and the sign of circumcision was given to him,
and to his posterity, as a seal of the righteousness of Rom. 4. 11.
his faith.

In paradise, the highest privilege of man, communion Gen. 18.
with his Maker, was lost by disobedience. On the
plain, or under the trees of Mamre, amid tents con-
secrated by a great act of simultaneous obedience,
Abraham, like Noah, enjoyed oral converse with his
LORD. The eternal God in the person of Jehovah-Jesus,
accompanied by two attendant angels, appeared at the
tent door of Abraham. The shepherd-king received
them with the cordiality and reverence of eastern
hospitality. The Lord walked with Abraham, and con-

James 4. 8.

versed with him as with a friend. The Lord knew that Abraham would "command his children and his household after him;" therefore He would not withhold from him that which He was about to do to Sodom. And Abraham, conscious of his high and holy relationship to God, drew near to Him. And as one caring equally for the honour of his Lord, and for the safety of the righteous few, entreated Jehovah for His own name's sake, and for the sake of the righteous, to spare the sinful city, even if there were but ten righteous there.

Gen. 19.

2 Pet. 2. 7-9.

While the Lord thus talked with Abraham, the two attendant angels went to Sodom. In the evening of this hallowed day, Lot sat in the gate of the city. "Vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked," his outstretched gaze might search afar for some link of communion with the venerable uncle, who had so recently delivered him from the hands of his enemies; or his eyes might be uplifted to heaven for some light to guide his weary feet. At such a season, how would he welcome visitors who were in all things so unlike the men of Sodom! "Lot rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground." Honoured with angel guests, apparently he became the protector of angels. The angels then protected him; and at the earliest dawn of morning, they hastened Lot, his wife, and daughters, from impending judgments.

The prayer of Lot for the little city of Zoar was heard; and there he found a refuge.

Yet one specific direction of the angels was disobeyed by Lot's wife; she looked behind her, towards the loved home she was leaving.

And she "became a pillar of salt"—"the monument of an unbelieving soul." Luke 17. 34.

"The men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Now, "they declare their sin: they hide it not." Gen. 13. 13.
Isa. 3. 9.

In the covenant that the Lord would no more destroy the earth by a flood of water, He granted no immunity to sin; He changed not His purpose towards sinners individually, or in the aggregate. Through a false sense of security, the men of Sodom were busy in the affairs of this life, but the cry of their sins had reached to heaven; and when the righteous one was gone, "then the Lord rained upon Sodom, and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire, from the Lord out of heaven. And He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." "And lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." Luke 17. 28, 29
Rev. 18. 5.
Gen. 19. 24, 25, 29.

Lest anyone should suppose that the work of judgment is appropriated by the Father, and the work of mercy exclusively by the Son, we remark the presence both of the Father and of the Son, in this work of judgment; for it is said, "The Lord rained.....fire from the Lord out of heaven." And in Jeremiah we read, "As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD." Jer. 50. 40.

The fact of this terrific judgment has been referred to in distant ages by inspired prophets, by well known historians, and by modern travellers. After the lapse of four hundred and sixty years, the land was said to be brimstone, and salt, and burning; and Zephaniah calls it "a perpetual desolation." And in these latter Deut. 29. 22-24.
Zep. 1. 9.

days it is described as a region abounding in lava, bitumen, and sulphur, having a mountain of salt, many rocks of salt, and small isolated masses. Within fifty years before the advent of our Lord, and a hundred and fifty years after that event, four great heathen authors mention the desolation of Sodom: and on it our Lord grounds a solemn admonition, that in the day of judgment it shall be more tolerable for Sodom than for the privileged Capernaum; and a prophecy, so important to us, that when the Son of man is revealed from heaven, men will be as unprepared for His appearing, as in the days of Lot they were for the destruction of Sodom.

Diodorus
Siculus,
Strabo,
Tacitus,
Pliny.
Matt. 11. 23, 24.

Luke 17. 30.
2 Peter 3. 10-12.
Jude 7.

Gen. 19. 29-38. Though delivered from this awful catastrophe, the daughters of Lot were not purged from the moral pestilence which they had imbibed with their daily breath; and by deliberate transgression they sought to obtain a desired blessing.

From this sin there sprang two mighty nations, for ever the enemies of Israel. And such was the continued anger of the Lord against them for this sin, that the Ammonite and the Moabite, were not admitted into the congregation of the Lord until the tenth generation, though the Edomite and the Egyptian might be admitted after the third. And Nehemiah thought their influence so contaminating, that he cursed those Jews who had married wives of Ammon and Moab. And as the worst woe that could be inflicted, Zephaniah threatened Moab and Ammon, that for their pride they should be as Sodom and Gomorrah.

Ju. 3. 28-30.
11. 4-36.
1 Sam. 11. 2.
2 Sam. 8. 2.
10. 1-14.

Deut. 23. 3, 7, 8.

Neh. 13. 23-25.

Zep. 2. 9.

Ruth 4. 17.

Yet in judgment the Lord remembered mercy. There was an entail of blessing on the seed of Abraham.

These daughters of Lot had once partaken of the blessing resting on the tents of Abraham, and probably they expected to be among the progenitors of the Messiah. If such were their hope, to the elder daughter the desire was granted; for, through Ruth the Moabitess, she was one of the links of earthly ancestry of the promised seed of Abraham.

After contemplating the ruinous consequences of Lot's desire for earthly gain in the loss of his wife, his goods, the honour of his daughters, and, we may conclude, of his own peace of mind, we turn to the man of faith, to him who lived apart from Sodom.

But even here, we see the deep root of sin. When Gen. 20. 1, 2, 9. sojourning in Gerar, the city of the uncircumcised Philistine, Abraham fell into the snare into which he was betrayed in Egypt; he again denied his covenant relationship with Sarah. He then heard from the heathen king those true words, "thou hast brought on me and on my house a great sin."

Is the Christian aware, that when he tacitly denies his covenant relationship to Christ, or to the body of Christ, he may see his own act in that of Abraham in Gerar?

The contemplated sin of Abimelech was visited by Gen. 20. 3-7. the immediate barrenness of his household. Before God he was a dead man. Ever after, Philistia was a thorn to the family of Abraham.

But God promised Abimelech, that if he restored Gen. 20. 7, 17. Sarah to her husband, Abraham should pray for him,

and he should live. Abimelech obeyed; and Abraham prayed to God, and the family blessings were granted.

Gen. 21. 1-8. And after this lesson of humiliation, the Lord granted to Abraham the long-promised child of faith. "And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him." And there was great joy in the household of faith.

Gen. 21. 9.
Gal. 4. 29. But in that household there still remained the bond-woman and her child, and on the day of greatest joy, the son of the Egyptian mocked. "He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit."

Gen. 21. 10-12.
Gal. 4. 30. Though grievous to Abraham, the voice of God sanctioned those words of Sarah, "Cast out this bond-woman and her son: for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." The family joy was no joy to Ishmael, therefore he must be separated from it.

Gen. 21. 13-21. Yet, because he was Abraham's seed, God would make of Ishmael a great nation. And the man of faith, who was also the promptly obedient man, "rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away." When this provision was spent, the Lord, who has promised to hear "the poor and needy when they seek water, and there is none," "heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said

Isa. 41. 17.

unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is." And Hagar again heard from the angel of God the joyful assurance, that that faint and weary boy should become a great nation. For their immediate bodily refreshment, "God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt."

How far Hagar and Ishmael wandered before the water of the bottle was spent is not left on record; but those who trace their ancestry to Ishmael endeavour to localize the remembrance of his restoration to life, by associating it with the Zemzem well of Mecca. Thither all pious Musulmans resort to drink of the water, and to "adore Providence."

Crichton's
Arabia.

At the command of God, Abraham had cast out of his house the cherished child of his bond-servant. Though heir of great temporal blessings, he sent him into the wilderness to be cared for by God alone. But the voice which approved the words of Sarah, now commanded a far deeper trial,—the slaying of Sarah's son, the long-expected child of promise, and now for many years the joy and solace of his heart. But God is a jealous God; His children must love the Giver better than the gift. He will now prove whether this child had become the idol of his father's heart. It might be reasonable to quit the worship of mere matter, though glorious as the sun and moon,—reasonable to cast out the son of the bond-woman when the true heir became a thriving boy;

Gen. 22.

but to slay with his own hand this precious, priceless child, in whom all the love and faithfulness of God seemed concentrated, this was no act of reason! Faith, or believing trustfulness in the well-known voice of an almighty, holy God, could alone justify it. No bidding of man, nor of any society of men, by whatever hallowed name they might be called, would warrant such a deed. The giver of life might alone recall it. Abraham knew the voice of the living God, and he obeyed it. He "rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him." On the third day of the journey, Abraham left the servants with the ass, that he and Isaac might alone ascend Mount Moriah to worship, yet promising, with no vague uncertainty, to "come again;" for Abraham accounted "that God was able to raise him (the son) up, even from the dead." Thus, the priest and sacrifice ascended the hill together, carrying with them the wood, the fire, and the knife. "And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood."

Heb. 11. 19.

The place, the altar, and the bound sacrifice, had proved the reverential and implicit obedience of Abraham. Now God knew that he feared Him, and the Lord delighted more in this obedience than in burnt-offering and sacrifice. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

Psa. 40. 6-8.
1 Sam. 15. 22.

The angel of the Lord now called to Abraham out of heaven, first to stay the hand of the sacrificing father, and to acknowledge his obedience, and when the sub-

stituted ram was offered, "the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this 'thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me, That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." Beside hearing the words of blessing, which so distinctly followed the words of command and the obedience of faith, many persons suppose that Abraham now saw a greater sacrifice than that of his own son, that it was at this time that he saw the day of Christ, that he rejoiced in the prophetic vision "and was glad." For the Lord God of Abraham most abundantly blesses His believing children in their severest trials. Gen. 22. 15-18.

To the son after the flesh, by revealing an earthly blessing—a well of water—God made himself known as the providing God. To the son after the Spirit, by revealing a substituted sacrifice—a ram—the Lord made himself known as the God of grace—of redemption.

Zemzem and Mecca have perpetuated the remembrance of the providence of God, in behalf of the material wants of His children. Mount Moriah and Jerusalem have told, and will yet tell, a wondrous tale of redemption and satisfaction, of spiritual worship, and of endeared communion. And, blessed be God, the greater includes the less. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8. 32.

The promised seed had been given, had been demanded

back again, had been graciously accepted, and again given to the faithful patriarch: but as yet he had received no other sign that the promise concerning the land would be fulfilled. Did Abraham ask the Lord to give him some pledge of its fulfilment—some little spot as an earnest that the whole should be the inheritance of the numerous seed promised to his one child? We know not his temptations concerning the land, but it is remarkable that his small possession was not the gift of God according to promise, but was purchased with the current money of the country. Death had preceded this small possession, and the possession itself was but the cave of death; yet it was an earnest of the future inheritance, for it was the gathering-place of the first links of ancestry of the promised seed. There Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, await the last trumpet, when they shall be raised incorruptible.

Gen. 23. The burial of Sarah was succeeded by the marriage of Isaac.

Gen. 25. 7-9. Abraham not only saw his beloved child married under the direction and blessing of his heavenly Father, but he lived to see his two grandsons attain the age of fifteen. And after a pilgrimage of a hundred and seventy-five years, he surrendered his spirit into the hands of God who gave it; and was buried by his two sons Isaac and Ishmael, in the cave of Machpelah.

John 5. 24. The righteousness of Abraham was fully evidenced in his life, and was not consequent on any change that could take place at his death. The Lord Jesus has said, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, is passed from death unto life." The record of Moses concerning Abraham agrees with this: "He believed in the Lord,

Gen. 15. 6.

and He accounted it to him for righteousness." So also the words of the prophet Habakkuk: "The just shall live by his faith." Both are quoted by the apostle Paul when he proved that righteousness and life are both essentially and immediately connected with believing. And he told the Galatians, that as righteousness was imputed to Abraham by faith, so they were "all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." And if they were Christ's, they were "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Hab. 2. 4.

Rom. 1. 17.

Gal. 3. 6, 11.

3. 26-29.

While the apostle Paul thus directs us to the faith of Abraham for the imputation of righteousness, the apostle James directs us to his works for the evidence of his righteousness. And as the good tree, or the engrafted tree, can alone bring forth good fruit, so the faith and righteousness of Abraham, and his fellowship with God were manifest in his life.

James 2. 21-24.

Matt. 7. 17.

And as far as the occupations of heaven are known to us, his life on earth foreshadowed his life in heaven. In his shepherd tent, he received the Lord Jesus, and two attendant angels. In the kingdom of heaven, believers, the mystical body of Christ, will sit down with Abraham. On earth, he walked with God, conversed with God, pleaded with God for saints and sinners, obeyed God. And three times, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he is called the Friend of God. By the pen of Isaiah, the Lord calls the patriarch, "Abraham my friend." King Jehoshaphat, when pleading with God, adds to the name of Abraham the personal relationship—"Thy Friend." And the apostle James repeats the hallowed term as a consequent on his faith, "And he was called the Friend of God."

Isa. 41. 8.

2 Chron. 20. 7.

James 2. 23.

To understand the existence of friendship between

God and man, as we find it in the history of Abraham, we may remember that friendship does not imply equality in position, or in any essential attribute; but it does imply some likeness of spirit producing mutual confidence, or some diversity of attributes which can blend in unity of spirit. Between the self-existent Jehovah and the man Abraham, the distance cannot be measured by any measurement of man; it is infinite. But the lost image of God is by faith restored to Abraham: and that which exists in Jehovah in unlimited degree, may be seen in limited extent in the shepherd-king. The mutual confidence was seen when the Lord said of Abraham, "I know him." And when Abraham said, "That be far from thee to do after this manner;" and, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" he spoke as one who knew the Lord, and who cared for His honour. We may also see the attributes of God harmonizing with the necessities of His servant, and thus by force of contrast uniting them together in holy fellowship. In the Lord God there was perfect rectitude, infinite love, and delight to impart His own holiness and glory to His believing servant. In Abraham there was the need of an imputed righteousness, and the willingness to receive an imputed righteousness, and there was a love and reverence for God, founded on the knowledge of what God is in himself, and on what He had imparted to His servant. Thus, between the great Creator and the man whom He had created, there existed the sacred tie of friendship.

Lu. 16. 19-31.

Our Lord represents Abraham as having received the beggar Lazarus into intimate fellowship with himself, and as holding conversation with Dives who is in a place of torment. Let us listen to truth as from the mouth of Abraham concerning the brethren of Dives

who were still on earth. As given by the evangelist Luke it is, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.....If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they hear, though one rose from the dead." If rendered according to the greater privileges of our day it would be, You have Moses and the prophets, the evangelists and the apostles; listen to them. If you hear not Moses and the prophets, the evangelists and the apostles, neither will you be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

While contemplating the position of Abraham on earth and in heaven, as "The Friend of God," we may also remember the words the Son of God addressed to His disciples, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever John 15. 14. I command you." During His sojourn on earth, He associated with these His friends on terms of familiar fellowship. He sat at the same table with them. And though He sent them to prepare the paschal feast, He Matt. 26. 17-20. himself made ready the simple meal of bread and fish. He invited them to partake of it by the words of accustomed intercourse, "Come and dine," and He then John 21. 9-13. distributed to each one his portion. And as the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" so Jesus said to His disciples, "I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father 15. 15. I have made known unto you."

May we not see in the life of Abraham, and in its hitherto developed results, as we have seen in the life of Noah, a wondrous length and breadth in those few words, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit?" 15. 5. And is not the position of Abraham at the destruction of Sodom described in the ninety-first Psalm? "He that dwelleth in the secret Psa. 91. 1-8. place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow

of the Almighty.....Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked."

Well may we afford to forget King Uruk and his massive structures, his material and perhaps emblematic worship; but the life of Abraham under his tent of skins, or worshipping at "an altar of earth," presents to us at every step some lesson in the life of faith. It continually asks us, Are we walking in the same path? Is a life of faith and obedience, of communion and fellowship, preparing us for the presence of the Redeemer, for all the glories of His kingdom? Can we now "draw near" to our Almighty Friend? Can we, through our High Priest, "come boldly to a throne of grace?"

Heb. 4. 16.

If we feel or fear that we are not the friends of God, or of His Son Jesus Christ, let us earnestly ask Him to give us His righteousness, His Holy Spirit, His wedding garment, that we may hear Him say to us, "Eat, O my friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Then we shall receive all requisite pre-fitness for sitting down with Him, and with Abraham His friend, for ever and ever.

Cant. 5. 1.

Book II.

CHAPTER III.

“ My Jesus, as Thou wilt!
O may Thy will be mine!
Into Thy hand of love
I would my all resign.
Through sorrow, or through joy,
Conduct me as Thine own,
And help me still to say,
My Lord, Thy will be done!”

B. SCHMOLK.

Book II.

CHAPTER III.

THE LIFE OF ISAAC.

The principle of obedience in Isaac, the same as that in Abraham—Isaac a pattern for the children of believers—Parallelism in the life of Isaac, in the life of Christ, and in that of all the children of God—Gerar—Wells taken by Philistines—Blessing on a peaceful disposition—The promises concerning the birthright forgotten—Departure of Jacob, and its consequences—Death and burial of Isaac.

WHILE tracing in the history of past ages some earnestness of future eternal realities, our patient, peaceful, joyful faith, may be strengthened by the few incidents recorded of Isaac, as well as by the many events related of the other patriarchs. The life of Isaac differs from that of Abraham, as the course of a boat on the calm and tranquil waters of a lake differs from that of a boat struggling amid the stormy ocean. Isaac had not to come out from an imposing external worship; he had not to leave home and kindred in order to obey God. His duty was to obey in tents characterized by faith and obedience. The principle of action in both was the same, though very differently tested. The obedience of the father and the son was alike the effect of reverential love, the only true obedience of spiritual beings, which rises far above that of a constrained subjection to authority, and is wholly distinct from the subjection of inert matter to physical laws.

John 10. 27.

Abraham heard the voice of God, he relied upon it, and obeyed it. Isaac heard the voice of his father, he relied upon it, and obeyed it. When Abraham was dead, Isaac heard the voice of his father's God, he knew it, and obeyed it. That may be said both of the father and the son, which Jesus said of the believer in His day, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Abraham has been called "The pattern of believers." May not Isaac, from his obedience to his father and to his father's God, be called the pattern for the children of believers?

In the life of Abraham on earth, we have seen some foreshinings of his life in heaven, and some foreshadowings of the earthly trials and blessings of his spiritual seed. In the life of Isaac, as the son of Abraham, we may see facts predictive of events in the life of the Son of God on earth, and some interesting links of association with the lives of those who by faith are the sons of God.

Gal. 4. 28.
Gen. 17. 19.

The birth of Isaac had been long foretold; he was the child of promise, and his name was appointed by God before his birth.

Psa. 2. 7-12.

Gal. 3. 16.
Matt. 1. 20, 21.

The birth of Christ was foretold for a thousand years; He was the promised seed; and before His birth His name was announced by an angel.

Eph. 1. 4.
Gal. 4. 28.Luke 10. 20.
Heb. 12. 23.

Believers "are chosen" in Christ "before the foundation of the world," "are the children of promise;" their names are written in heaven.

Gen. 21. 1-7.

When the set time of which God had spoken to Abraham was come, the sound of joy was heard amid the shepherd tents on the plains of Beersheba, for the promised child was come. And Sarah said, "God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear me will laugh." Isaac, the name given to the child, signifies laughter.

Eighteen hundred and ninety years after this, there Luke a. 1-20. was great joy on the plains and in the city of Bethlehem. While the shepherds were watching their flocks by night, they heard the angels of God announce tidings of great joy to all people; for on that day was born in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. This Saviour was the son of Mary, and the promised seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth Gen. 22. 18. shall be blessed.

"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God Luke 15. 7, 10, 18-32. over one sinner that repenteth;"—joy in heaven over one child new born, or "born again," to his father's house.

At a great feast held in honour of the infant Isaac, Gen. 21. 8-10. the heir of Abraham's house, Ishmael was not willing to say, "He must increase, but I must decrease;" he John 3. 30. mocked the child born after the Spirit.

When the wise men came from the East to acknow- Matt. 2. 1-16. ledge the infant Christ as the King of the Jews, and to worship Him, Herod, then King of Judea, ordered all the children of two years old and under to be slain.

The disciple is not to be above his Master. Jesus Matt. 10. 24. has said, "If they have persecuted me, they will also John 15. 20. persecute you."

Isaac was not driven from his home, as was his Lord; Gen. 22. but when his reason was ripening and his will developing, he was required to accompany his father in a three days' journey to Mount Moriah. They went to worship. Worship ordinarily implies self-abnegation before an object of supreme reverence. Abraham worshipped God, therefore his own fatherly heart, and the life of his loved child were held in subjection to the will of God. Isaac, in the strength of youth or early manhood, must have consented to be bound, or the will of the aged patriarch

would have been unavailing. Both father and son plainly manifested the obedience of supreme reverence.

The transactions of Moriah, and the son's willing obedience were all seen in greater force on Calvary.

John 6. 38. Jesus said of himself, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me."

10. 17, 18. "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."

Luke 22. 42. "Not my will, but thine, be done."

Psa. 40. 8. Delight in the law of God, as in the transcript of his father's heart, characterizes the spiritual child of God. The spirit of sonship is in all ages the same; Christ the pattern, the believer conformed to His image.

119.
Rom. 7. 22.
8. 17-29.

Gen. 24. After the sacrifice had been accepted, and the life of the sacrifice restored; and after the death and burial of Sarah, the faithful servant was sent to the city of Nahor, to Haran in Mesopotamia, to the place of Terah's death, to seek a wife for Isaac. The servant prayed to the Lord God of Abraham to bless his errand. He was received by the family of Nahor as the "blessed of the Lord," and his errand as that which proceeded from the Lord. Rebecca believed his message, and when asked whether she would go with Abraham's servant, she said, "I will go;" and she was permitted to go, as the Lord had spoken. Once the servant prayed to the Lord, and before he had done speaking, his prayer was answered; and three times he bowed his head, and worshipped, and blessed the Lord God of his master Abraham which had led him in the right way.

Isa. 65. 24.
Dan. 9. 20-23.

Compare
Gen. 25. 20 with
ch. 11. 12, 14, 16,
18, 20, 22, 24.

The deliberate waiting until Isaac was forty years of age, before the servant was sent to seek the wife, as fully evince the faith of the son as of the father: and we must not forget that the faith of Isaac was further tried by a waiting period of twenty years before he

received the blessing of a promised heir. And, after having proved the power of faith in patient waiting, he received from the Lord his two-fold blessing.

While God regards each individual believer as His child, the church, or body of believers, is spoken of as united to Christ in the relationship of a wife. We have been contemplating the life of Isaac, as it accords with that of the Son of God; and in Eliezer we may see a similitude of the servants of God gathering together the church for the marriage of the Lamb. They are continually proclaiming the love of Christ and the riches of the Father's house. Their sound is still going out "into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. And a multitude whom no man can number have believed the message, and like Rebecca have been willing to leave all to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." The Son of God is now gone to prepare a place for His people, He is now at His Father's right hand, waiting till all things be accomplished, and He will come again to receive His disciples, His church, to himself, and the voice of praise will one day proclaim, that "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."

The principles involved in the marriage of Isaac, should characterize the marriage of the spiritual child of Abraham. For him, the law of his father is, that he marry "only in the Lord;" and that he "be not unequally yoked with unbelievers;" that he honour his father and his mother. And then, like Isaac, he will receive the blessing of the Lord.

There is one other fact which carries our thoughts onward to the Son of God, and to the believing children of God. Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. And Jesus said, "All things that the Father hath are mine."

Eph. 5. 23-32.

Rev. 19. 7, 8.

Rom. 10. 18.

Rev. 7. 9.

14. 4.

John 14. 2, 3.

Heb. 10. 12, 13.

1 Cor. 7. 39.

2 Cor. 6. 14.

John 16. 15.

He said also of His disciples, and of those who should believe on Him "through their word," "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." And by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, the children of God are begotten "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven," and "ready to be revealed in the last time." An inheritance summed up in these few words, "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

John 17. 20-23.
1 Peter 1. 3-5.
1 Cor. 3. 21-23.

After the death of Abraham, we trace the life of Isaac as it unfolds what is in man, even in redeemed man, and the Lord's dealings with His own children.

Gen. 26. 2-5. "The Lord appeared unto Isaac, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

Gen. 26. 3, 6-9. The heathen court of Gerar proved the same snare to Isaac that it had before been to Abraham. Although he had the command of God for remaining there, though the covenant had been there renewed, he trusted not in

the Lord, but yielded to the temptation of the great deceiver.

"Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundred-fold : and the Lord blessed him." Gen. 26. 12, 14.

Though the faith of Isaac here failed, he fully manifested that other fruit of the Spirit, the love of peace. Gen. 26. 15-21.

Isaac was heir to all the land within his view, yet, like his father, he was willing to wait the Lord's time for its possession. The faith and peaceful spirit of Isaac were tried by frequent contentions for the wells of water, which to his numerous flocks and herds were necessities of life, and which, from the rocky nature of the district, could only be "bored" with great labour ; and to avoid strife, Isaac thrice abandoned wells, the work of his own and of his father's servants. Matt. 5. 9.

Lest the heart of Isaac should faint with these repeated trials, on the night of the third removal, the Lord appeared to him, to strengthen and comfort him, and said, "I am the God of Abraham thy father : fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake." As a further proof of the Lord's mercy, his jealous neighbour Abimelech came with his chief captain, to make a covenant of peace with him. And the peaceful labour of his diligent servants was on the same day rewarded ; for after digging, they brought the welcome tidings that they had found water. Psa. 27. 13. Gen. 26. 24-33. Prov. 16. 7.

And at Beersheba, the scene of past and present blessings, Isaac "builded an altar, and called on the name of the LORD."

Thus, in quiet waiting, and believing confidence, the

days of the heir of faith glided by ; he was content to be led by still waters, in the paths of righteousness both by an earthly and by a heavenly Father's hand.

Gen. 27. 1-4. But when Isaac had attained his hundredth year, he was not, like his father, strong in faith ; for with the advancing infirmities of age, his faith had become feeble. Isaac heeded not the prophecy communicated to Rebecca, and attempted to act according to the feelings of nature, and not according to the will and word of the Lord.

Gen. 31. 41.
25. 20.
26. 34. The result was, that for twenty, if not for the remaining eighty years of his life, he was deprived of that prop of his declining years, the son on whom the blessing rested.

Gen. 35. 27. Yet, he was permitted to see this son once more before his death ; and he must have rejoiced with all a father's joy when he heard of the reconciliation of his two sons. "And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre," which has since been called "the city of the friend of God."

Gen. 35. 29. Isaac, "being old and full of days," died. And his twin-born but now patriarchal sons, Esau and Jacob, together laid the remains of their honoured parent in the cave of Machpelah.

This parallelism in the life of Isaac with that of our Lord, and by analogy with the spiritual life of His followers, may induce us to take a deeper interest in the lamb-like patriarch. While we thankfully acknowledge that in Christ alone we have every needful earnest of His Father's love, we delight in con-

templating persons whose career has resembled that of our Lord, and in learning from them our place of privilege, and our path of duty, looking forward to the time when those who have in faith preceded Him, and those who have in like manner followed Him, shall together meet before "the throne of God and of the Lamb."

"WOULDEST thou the life of souls discern ?
Nor human wisdom nor divine,
Helps thee by aught beside to learn ;
Love is life's only sign."

KEBLE.

Book II.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LIFE OF ESAU.

Jerusalem and Petra—The Election of Grace—The birthright lost—Temporal blessings—Perpetual desolations, for perpetual hatred—Election to be proved by faith and love.

WE have already seen in the families of Adam, of Noah, and of Abraham, that the Lord had a spiritual seed to serve Him. The tents of Isaac also witnessed the election of grace. And though the land of Israel and its city Jerusalem, the land of Edom and its city Petra, each in its history testifies of man's exceeding sinfulness; yet upon Jerusalem the Lord put His holy name; and lest His name should be polluted among the heathen, Israel was sometimes saved from deserved Hos. 2. 14. wrath, at other times the indignation of the Lord was Eze. 5. poured out with a more grievous woe.

Edom, Idumea and Petra, in the long vista of ages, are associated with Esau: and the desolate valley and the deserted rock-city utter the harsh tones of fraternal hatred.

The Lord said, "Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, Mal. 1. 2, 3. and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness."

Rom. 9. 11-23. If, for this election of grace, any should impute unrighteousness to God, the apostle replies, "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction : and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath afore prepared unto glory ?"

Rom. 11. 5, 6. Thus, while the reasons for "the election of grace" may be reckoned among "the secret things which belong unto the Lord our God ;" the fact that God does elect, or choose his own people, must be acknowledged to be among "those things which are revealed," and as such "belong unto us and to our children for ever."

1 Pet. 1. 2.
Eph. 1. 4. And though it is self-evident that the new birth cannot be purchased by man's imperfect righteousness ; yet, the communication of the Spirit of God to the mind of man, and the consequent impartation of spiritual life, will be made known by some measure of conformity to the image of God in Christ Jesus. The election of God the Father will be seen in the "sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

Gen. 25. 22, 23. The election of Jacob, the younger son of Isaac, to the birthright-blessings was first made known to his mother in answer to her anxious prayer.

Gen. 25. 27. "The boys (Esau and Jacob) grew : and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field ; and Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents."

Gen. 25. 34. The hardy hunter despised his birthright, and sold it for a "morsel of meat."

Gen. 27. 30-38. And when he expected the birthright-benediction to be pronounced by his father, "he was rejected ; for he

found no way to change his mind, though he sought it carefully with tears."

Although Esau had despised and had lost his higher blessing, the Lord, who is full of compassion and gracious, gave him "the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven from above." Excepting the loss of the birthright, we read of no trials. He dwelt at ease amid his father's tents; and after a twenty years' separation from Jacob, he would receive no present from him, saying, "I have enough." And his descendants "reigned as kings in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel."

Gen. 27. 39, 40.

33. 9.

1 Chron. 1. 43.

Esau hated his brother, and said in his heart that he would slay him.

Gen. 27. 41.

Through the mercy of God, he was prevented from putting his threat into execution; and when they next met, Jacob's prayer was abundantly answered; for "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

Gen. 33.

But in the after history of the descendants of Esau, hatred of Jacob appears as the fearful upgrowth of an evil seed laid deep within the soil.

Esa. 25. 12.
35. 5, 14, 15.

Ezekiel prophesied of perpetual desolations on Edom for its perpetual hatred of Israel. And Obadiah predicted that Edom should be cut off for ever, because he helped not his brother in the day of his calamity.

Eze. 25. 13, 14.
35.
Oba. 8. 9, 15-21

Seeing, in the onward stream of time, one sinful thought thus reproducing itself for more than a thousand

years, shall we not more jealously watch against every evil suggestion, and more earnestly resist the many temptations of the devil?

Oba. 6. And, if the most high God thus searched out the hidden thoughts of Esau, how will His Son regard the evil-surmisings and evil-speakings of His children one against another? Has He not said, that all men should know His disciples by their love one to another? And

John 13. 35. is not the proof of election to be found in love, and

1 John 4. 19.
5. 1, 2. obedience to God, in works of faith, labours of love, and

1 Thess. 1. 3, 4. patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ?

Book II.

CHAPTER V.

"PRAYER's a weapon for the feeble,
Weakest souls can wield it best."

HART.

"THY ministering spirits descend,
To watch while Thy saints are asleep ;
By day and by night they attend,
The heirs of salvation to keep :
Bright seraphs, despatched from the throne,
Repair to their stations assigned ;
And angels elect are sent down,
To guard the elect of mankind."

TOPLADY.

Book II.

CHAPTER V.

THE LIFE OF JACOB.

Individualities of character in Isaac and Jacob—Unbrotherly bargain—Judgments and mercies of the Lord—Jacob's fears—He wrestles with an Angel—That Angel Jehovah—Jesus—Strength out of weakness—Shechem—Bethel—Many trials—Famine—Joseph found—Goes down into Egypt—Patriarchal blessings—Love and chastisement—Ministry of Angels—Fear not.

THE hills and valleys of the land of Canaan have witnessed strange as well as solemn sights. Having seen the heir of unbounded blessings wending his way in the company of his aged father, and carrying the wood on which he was about to be offered in sacrifice, they afterward saw the next heir, of the same unlimited blessings, travelling alone, carrying his staff, with the provision for his journey. Though his father's blessing rested on his head, and his mother's command guided his footsteps, he was a fugitive from the wrath of an only brother.

In the elder patriarch, we have seen that child-like spirit which was so characteristic of the Son of God, and which should distinguish the children of God. In Jacob we see the spirit of fear and of eye-service; and in his life the facts of bargaining and of receiving wages.

In all the vivid reality of facts depicted in this history, we may possibly see some actuating principles which have influenced our own personal history, or which may impart distinctive features to the time in which we live. And we shall certainly see much of the gracious loving-kindness of the Lord our God, that He is, in very deed, "pitiful and of tender mercy," and that He adapts His succour to the peculiar need of His children; for it was when the loneliness or the dangers of the journey aroused the apprehensive timidity of Jacob's character, that the Lord sent His angels on a mission of love to cheer or to guard him.

James 5. 11.

The birth of Jacob, the loved one of his mother, had been preceded by a prophecy, that his elder brother should serve him.

Gen. 25. 23.

25. 29-34-

A firm reliance on the word of the Lord would not have required that promise to be ratified by his elder brother. Yet when Esau returned faint from hunting, probably in a time of famine, Jacob demanded the birthright as the price of a mess of pottage. In making this hard bargain, the conscience-stricken Jacob required an oath, saying, "Swear to me this day." "Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles."

27. 1-24.

The weakness of faith, which at such a time suggested so unbrotherly a compact, was ill-prepared to resist a greater temptation. When his blind and aged father intended to give the birthright benediction to his elder brother, and that brother was expecting to receive it, Jacob and his mother listened to that foe, whose voice of unbelief is heard whenever there is an open ear to listen to it: he suggested, and they consented to act and speak a lie, in order to obtain the parental blessing.

And, as a child of God, he was chastened for yielding to the temptation. For instead of roaming at will with his brother Esau among the rocky wilds of the South, he was an exile from his father's house, banished from the loving sympathies of his mother's heart.

Gen. 27. 41-45.
28. 2-10.

Yet, on the first night of his departure, the Lord appeared to him in a vision. When arrived at "the place of the altar," the first altar built by his grandfather in Canaan, with a stone for his pillow, canopied by the blue vault of heaven, weary, and perhaps stricken with a sense of sin, he saw a ladder, "whose foot was set upon the earth, whose top reached to heaven." On this ladder or "staircase," He saw the angels of God ascend and descend. He also saw the Lord above it; and heard His voice, saying, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac;" and to the blessing given to Abraham He added, "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." The faint-hearted man might hence have seen that his true strength lay in trusting the Lord his God, and that He would give him more than bread and raiment, which alone he requested.

28. 11-22.

Though the Lord had fully assured him of his love, He withdrew not his chastisement. In seeking a wife, Jacob became a servant—servant to a crafty uncle, who substituted another daughter for the purchased wife, and who ill-requited laborious, responsible service, by changing his wages ten times.

29. 15-26.

31. 40, 41.

Yet the mercies of the Lord never failed. During

30. 27, 43.

his twenty years of hard service, Jacob was enriched with "cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses." And Laban was blessed for Jacob's sake. At its close, the God of Bethel, in a dream, again appeared to him, and told him that He had seen all that Laban had done to him: and He commanded him to return to the land of his kindred, and promised to be with him.

Gen. 31, 3, 11-13.

Gen. 31, 24.

And He, who with a Father's love watched over this timid child, admonished Laban in a dream, saying, "Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad." And as the angels of God had attended his journey to Haran, so again, on his homeward journey, "the angels of God met him."

32. 1.

Though so specially directed and protected, Jacob's all-prevailing fearfulness was unsubdued. The "I will be with thee" of Jehovah was not sufficient for him. When his messengers returned, saying, his brother was coming to meet him, bringing four hundred men with him, Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.

32. 6, 7.

32. 9-12.

Luke 15. 19.

His fears now led him to cast himself upon the care of his heavenly Father, and to remind Him that he had undertaken the journey in obedience to His command. Like the prodigal son in the parable, he confessed his own entire unworthiness, and then presented his request to be delivered from his brother Esau, of whom he was afraid. He feared lest Esau should even now prevent the accomplishment of God's promise, that his seed should be as the sand of the sea.

32. 13-24.

After imploring the protection of God, he turned to his flocks and herds, and arranged drove after drove to be presented to his lord Esau, saying, "I will appease

him with the present that goeth before me;" and when he had seen them all over the brook Jabbok, "Jacob was left alone."

And while thus alone, and overwhelmed with a sense Gen. 32. 24-30 of present danger, One in the form of man appeared to him; and, though so oppressed by the fear of his brother, it is remarkable that he manifests no alarm at the presence of this Divine Angel in the form of man. "He wept, and made supplication unto Him;" Hos. 12. 3, 4. he wrestled with Him. "And when the Angel saw that he prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him; and he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh."

The sense of his own weakness impelled Jacob to grasp firmly One who was Strength: he replied to the Angel, whom he soon after knew as God, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." The Lord would not then allude to his real helplessness, even by the words, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob." He conferred on 1 Sam. 15. 29. him a title of lasting honour, and assured him of the Divine blessing, saying, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob (supplanter), but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." And Esau, who had caused this deep anxiety, ran to meet him. He embraced him as a much-loved brother, "and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Isa. 41. 14.

Believing that the Lord, who appeared to the Old Testament saints as a man or an angel, was the Lord Jesus Christ of the New Testament, we mark the oneness of his character under the two dispensations; thus, He who suffered a man, tormented with the malady of

fear, to prevail in an actual wrestling with himself, afterwards suffered the woman of Canaan, whose daughter was grievously vexed with a devil, to prevail in her vehement cries for help, and to secure an answer to her petition. He who said to Solomon, "Ask what I shall give thee," said to His disciples, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." And, "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

It is the natural result of conscious weakness to lean upon extraneous strength. This is true spiritually. He who has the deepest sense of his own sinfulness, needs the strongest faith in the righteousness of an almighty Saviour. Paul wrote, "When I am weak, then am I strong." And such was the experience of Jacob.

The patriarchal family had been following in the track of Abraham from Haran to Beersheba; and now that Jacob's heart was relieved from its load of fear, he could lift up his eyes, and, from the heights around the Jabbok, could look northward and southward, eastward and westward; and in the centre of the good land his eye would rest on the fertile vale of Shechem. Thither he directed his steps; there he halted; he purchased land, and built an altar.

But Jacob's "kindred" dwelt not in Shechem; therefore it was not the place that God had told him of. And this fertile halting-place became a snare to Dinah, to Simeon, and to Levi.

"And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God."

The strange gods, which had been brought from Haran, were searched out, were given to Jacob, and buried at Shechem. The patriarchal family then proceeded to Bethel, and there the altar was built, according to the command of the Lord.

There God again appeared to Jacob, and renewed to him the covenant blessing. Gen. 35. 9-15.

A series of sorrows now fell heavily on the affectionate heart of Jacob. He lost his beloved Rachel, and when her son Joseph was seventeen years of age, through the envy and deceit of his ten elder sons, he mourned for this favourite child as for one dead, and "refused to be comforted." And after twenty years of grief, the patriarch encountered the trial of famine, that severe test of faith; yet he only regarded Egypt as a place of merchandise, from whence he might supply the wants of his family. The famine involved a new trial—parting with his beloved Benjamin. 35. 16-20.
37.
41. 54-57.
42. 1-3.
43. 1-15.

As when his fears were at their height concerning his brother Esau, he obtained the greatest blessing from the Lord; so now, when he thought all things were against him, and that his grey hairs would be brought down with sorrow to the grave, the highest earthly blessings were preparing for him. His sons brought the tidings that his long-lost Joseph was yet alive. But this joy was too great for his belief. "His heart fainted, for he believed them not." Yet when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him into Egypt, his spirit revived. 45. 25-28.

On this third great journey of his life, he rested at Beersheba, the dwelling-place of Abraham and Isaac. 46. 1-7.

There he offered sacrifices to the God of his fathers; and there, surrounded by old parental associations, he doubtless remembered, that in the land of Egypt, to which he was now going, the faith of Abraham had failed; that there Sarah had brought domestic trials on herself; and that, in the days of his boyhood, the Lord had forbidden his father to go there. In the stillness of the night, probably while pondering over these sad recollections, he heard a voice, saying, "I am God, the God of thy father; fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hands upon thine eyes."

Gen. 45. 28-30.

Thus, again fully assured of the presence of God, Jacob proceeded on his journey. And in the land of Goshen he embraced his noble-hearted son. This son, now a prince of Egypt, "fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while."

37. 2.
47. 28.

During seventeen years the patriarch had watched the opening faculties of this beloved son, and now for seventeen years he reaps a rich harvest of earthly joy and gladness. And when his days were drawing to a close, the Lord granted him that prophetic knowledge which so gratifies the heart of man. He revealed to

49.

him the blessings that would rest on nine of his sons. The birthright-blessing of pre-eminence and dominion which should distinguish Judah: and the birthright-blessing of a double portion, which the children of Joseph should inherit. The goodly words which the children of Naphthali should hear from the Son of God: and the royal dainties to be yielded by the fruitful land of Asher. And though the Lord shewed the aged Jacob, that Reuben his first-born should not excel; that Simeon and Levi should be scattered in Israel; yet from them

Matt. 4. 13-16.

His mercies were not altogether withheld. For Reuben as the first-born possessed the first portion of the promised land. And the curse upon Levi was turned into a blessing; for it was in the high position of priests of the Lord that his tribe was scattered throughout the land of Israel.

Num. 32. 1-33.

Deut. 10. 9.

After blessing his twelve sons, and charging them to bury him in the cave of Machpelah, Jacob yielded up the ghost.

Gen. 49. 29-33.

This request of the dying patriarch appears only to refer to companionship in death, or in resurrection. But the name of Israel was to be renowned throughout the world: and his burial was to be the burial of a king. The name of the then reigning Pharaoh of Egypt may be difficult to ascertain, but the pilgrim Jacob has left his new name of Israel as the designation of a still existing people, a name that beams yet more brightly in prophetic vision.

With a staff Jacob had in his youth passed over Jordan; but now his lifeless body is carried over the historic stream, accompanied by a funeral cavalcade such as the world has seldom witnessed. Joseph, the deputy king of Egypt, appears as chief mourner, accompanied by his eleven brethren, and surrounded by "all the servants of Pharaoh, all the elders of his house, and all the elders (or chiefs,) of the land of Egypt, and all the house of Joseph, and his father's house." "And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company." Thus, the mighty Egypt paid its homage to the servant of the living God.

50. 1-13.

The Lord has said, "Jacob have I loved," and His apostle has declared that, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." This combination of love and chastening

Rom. 9. 13.

Heb. 12. 6.

signally characterized the life of Jacob. And that which was so true of Jacob individually, was equally true of Israel as a family and nation. They were eminently a people cherished and chastened. Thus, while we read of the continual chastisements of the Lord toward Israel, we find the worldling Balaam constrained to say, "God hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." And the prophets David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Malachi, severally testify to the same all-powerful and ever-faithful love. And when Amos and Nahum denounce the judgments of God against rebellious Israel, the phrase, "the excellency of Jacob," seemed to add peculiar poignancy to the predicted judgments. And though now, for a time, the seed of Israel are deeply chastened, are a proverb and a by-word, and are scattered among the nations of the world, they shall yet with great honour and glory be re-assembled "from the four corners of the earth."

If Jacob on his journeys saw the angels of God round about him; if the Israelites in their memorable pilgrimage from Egypt, were guided and protected by the Angel of God; will they not in their more glorious return, which has yet to be accomplished, also have the guardianship of angels, or of the Angel of God?

He who took on Him the seed of Abraham, and was "made like unto his brethren," condescended to be "made perfect through suffering." When in the wilderness, after He had been with wild beasts, and had been tempted by Satan, He also was succoured by the ministry of angels.

We have already seen that some of the blessings promised to the natural seed of Abraham are equally promised to his spiritual seed. David pronounced a

Num. 23. 21.

Psa. 47. 4.
135. 4.

Isa. 45. 3, 4.
49. 26.
55. 14.

Jer. 46. 27, 28.
Mal. 1. 2.

Amos 6. 8.
Nah. 2. 2.

Dent. 28. 37.
1 Kings 9. 7.

Isa. 11. 10-16.

Jer. 23. 7, 8.

Heb. 2. 10-18.

Mark 1. 12, 13.

blessing on the man whom the Lord chastens, and we find that chastisement, as the accompaniment of love, is the heritage of all the children of God. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." And the apostle Paul, in speaking of angels, adds, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" And since Peter, Paul, and John, all enjoyed the occasional ministry of angels, is there any difficulty in believing that it is still at times afforded to the children of God?

From analogy it is inferred, that when the Israelites shall as a nation be gathered to their own country, they will be attended by angels. But we have the testimony of Scripture, that when the "Son of man" shall appear, the angels will be His active agents in gathering together the elect.

He who so tenderly watched over Jacob by the ministry of angels, who himself said to him, "Fear not to go down into Egypt," has above seventy times said to his believing yet timid people, "Fear not," or, "Be not afraid." These words, so cheering to the doubting, so strengthening to the feeble, have been conveyed by a direct voice from heaven,* by Jehovah appearing as an Angel,† by His beloved Son in the person of Jesus Christ,‡ by the voice of created angels,|| or by His servants the prophets.§

The life of Jacob fully illustrates this precept which is so abundantly scattered throughout the Scriptures of

* Gen. 15. 1; 26. 24; 46. 3; Num. 21. 34; Josh. 8. 1; 11. 6; Ju. 6. 10; Isa. 40. 9; Jer. 1. 8; 10. 5; Exe. 2. 6; 3. 9; Acts 18. 9.

† Gen. 21. 17; Ju. 6. 23; 2 Kings 1. 15; Dan. 10. 12, 19.

‡ Matt. 10. 26, 28, 31; 14. 27; 28. 10; Mark 5. 36; Luke 5. 10; 8. 50; 12. 4, 34; Rev. 1. 17.

|| Matt. 1. 20; 28. 5; Luke 1. 13, 30; 2. 10; Acts 27. 24.

§ Gen. 50. 19, 21; Ex. 14. 13; 20. 20; Num. 14. 9; Deut. 1. 21; 3. 2; 20. 1, 3; 31. 6, 8; 1 Sam. 12. 20; 22. 23; 23. 17; 1 Kings 17. 13, 14; 2 Kings 6. 16; 1 Chron. 28. 20; 2 Chron. 20. 17; Neh. 4. 14; Isa. 7. 4; 35. 4; 41. 10, 13, 14; 43. 1, 5; 44. 4, 8; 51. 7; 54. 4; Jer. 30. 10; 40. 9; 46. 27, 28; Lam. 3. 57; Joel 2. 21; Zep. 3. 16; Zech. 8. 13, 15; 1 Pet. 3. 14.

God. It plainly says, Fear not to accept from God's own hands the freely promised heritage. Fear not to await its possession until the Lord's own time for granting it. Be afraid to wear a false character or clothing before the Lord. But, Believer in Jesus, fear not to obey the commands of a heavenly Father. Fear not, lest you should fail to receive your Father's smile of approbation. Fear not, lest you should be denied the guardianship of your Father's servants. Lay aside every fear that you will not arrive at your Father's house. For all the promises of God are "Yea and Amen" in Christ Jesus. And He has said of those whom He owns as His sheep, "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

John 14. 1-3.

2 Cor. 1. 20.

John 10. 28.

Book II.

CHAPTER VI.

"My Lord, my God, a blissful end I see,
Though now I know not what I yet shall be."

LANGBECKER.

Book II.

CHAPTER VI.

RACHEL AND BENJAMIN.

The Patriarchal family—Death of Deborah—Rachel's trouble—Death of Rachel—Combined prophecies—Influence of the present on the future.

ENCAMPED beside the oak at Bethel, near the pillar of remembrance, with the voice of God re-assuring him of blessings yet in store, Jacob may have been joyfully contemplating his numerous family as the earnest of the greater promised blessings. Rachel, by his side, may have been rejoicing in her son Joseph, and in a further share of the covenanted promise, when death and sorrow entered the patriarchal family. Rachel's nurse, the aged Deborah, died. The loss of this faithful servant seemed irreparable, for it was soon followed by the death of the much-loved Rachel.

In the life of Rachel, one trial of her heart shewed forth its frailty, and also the love and the jealousy of the Lord. Though rich in her husband's affection, Rachel had felt her heart poor and empty without the solace of children.

Envyng her sister on account of her numerous Gen. 30. 1. family, Rachel had said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die."

Gen. 30. 22, 24.

35. 16-19.

The Lord, who knew her sorrow, gave her a son, whom she named Joseph. After the patriarchal family had left Padan-aram, as they continued their journey southward from Bethel, they came near to Ephrath, there the too-anxious desire of her heart was a second time granted.

This second son, she called Benoni, the son of my sorrow ; for his life caused her death.

But his father called him Benjamin, the son of his right hand.

Essay by
Forster.
Micah 5. 2.

Jer. 31. 15.

Matt. 2. 18-21.

Isa. 53. 3.

Psa. 80. 17.

Matt. 2. 1-18.

A thousand years passed away, and a prophet of God foretold the birth of another infant in Bethlehem Ephrata. Two hundred years after that, another prophet described the voice of Rachel as proceeding from Ramah, and, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted, because they were not. Another five hundred years rolled away, in all seventeen hundred years since the birth of Benjamin, when these several prophecies were combined and accomplished. Then "He whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting," who has been described as "a man of sorrows," and as "the man of thy right hand," was born at Bethlehem Ephrata; then was the voice of weeping heard for the loss of the murdered children of Bethlehem.

Although the patriarchal party at Bethlehem Ephrata knew from the voice of God, that a mighty blessing was enwrapped within its curtained tents, yet they would scarcely imagine that the secret weeping of Rachel would be carried on in prophetic story as representing future events, or, that the names of the new-born infant should describe the great Messiah. So

the child of God, who is co-heir with Christ, may know as a general fact, that unspeakable glories are in store for all the children of God ; yet he may not discern how the particular events in which he is engaged are entwined with the forthcoming facts of the Redeemer's kingdom. But the more closely we examine the word of God, the more definitely we see the Son of God portrayed in the Old Testament histories ; and the more brightly shall we see our part and portion with Him in the present age, and in that which is to come.

"No distance breaks the tie of blood;
Brothers are brothers evermore;
Nor wrong, nor wrath of deadliest mood,
That magic may o'erpower;
Oft, 'ere the common source be known,
The kindred drops will claim their own,
And throbbing pulses silently
Move heart toward heart by sympathy.

"So is it with true Christian hearts,
Their mutual share in Jesus' blood
An everlasting bond imparts
Of holiest brotherhood:
Oh! might we all our lineage prove,
Give and forgive, do good and love,
By soft endearments in kind strife
Lightening the load of daily life."

KEBLE.

Book III.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH.

The patriarchal family expand into a nation—Egypt its place of training not its home—Joseph hated by his brethren—Is taken to Egypt as a slave—His faith manifested—Is falsely accused—Is imprisoned—Dreams—From a slave is made a prince—Pharaoh's regard for Joseph and for his family a proof of the king's confidence in him—The blessing on Joseph in harmony with all promised blessings—Fulfillment of his dreams—He declares himself to his brethren—Jacob goes into Egypt—Is presented to Pharaoh—Analogies between the life of Joseph and that of the Lord Jesus.

THE patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, dwelt in the promised land, without possessing it. As the children of a heavenly Father, though sometimes following their own will, they were, in the main current of their lives, content to be guided by Him, and to receive the supply of all their wants from His bountiful care. They were untutored in the arts and refinements of life, and little heeded the struggles of nations for wealth and dominion.

But this patriarchal family was to expand into a nation, and to become numerous as the sand on the sea shore. Though to be innumerable, they were not, like the family of Noah, to inhabit the whole earth. A definite limit was assigned them, within which they

were nationally and individually to act as witnesses for God.

To train them for this high destiny, they were, by a series of occurrences, sent to a land limited in its extent, but remarkable for its fertility and high cultivation, and which supported a population whose reputed numbers seem incredible; a land where the life of every man was sacred, and jealously guarded; a land in which every man was required to fulfil some important relative duty. Three unquestionable requisites for a family or a nation that was to become innumerable on a limited territory.

See
Wilkinson's
Ancient
Egyptians.

But, though Israel might be trained in Egypt, they were not to become Egyptians. They were, according to our Lord's most beautiful prayer, to be in the world, but not of it. In it, as their temporary dwelling-place and sphere of action; therefore their minds must be disciplined to the requirements of a social polity, and their hands inured to skilful labour. But not of the world; for "the world by wisdom knew not God."

John 17. 14-16.

1 Cor. 1. 21.

Existing memorials prove the fitness of Egypt for a place of training in all the necessary arts and more elaborate conveniences and embellishments of this life, and also its suitability as a school of necessary separation from ensnaring idolatry. The pyramids, obelisks, sculptured tombs, and many-pillared houses, whose remains excite our astonishment, must have been familiar objects to the eyes of Joseph. Vases of gold and silver, of alabaster, and pottery or porcelain, adorned the houses of the rich. And though a modern poet sings of the arm-chair and sofa as newly-acquired luxuries, the steward of Potiphar's house may have had many such under his charge. With these monuments of power and of skill, with successful cultivation

of the field, application of the mechanical arts, and training for war, Egypt could instruct Israel in the appliances of this life. In the observance of festivals, and in the continual honouring of the gods, if it taught devotion, it would to the people of God more certainly teach separation from their worship. It was a land of idolatry; it teemed with gods. In almost every animal, the Egyptians saw some attribute of the Divine mind; and under the pretext of worshipping the attribute, they worshipped the animal, or some image which they had formed to embody the attribute. They "consecrated each month and day to a particular deity;" and they invoked their tutelary deities to intercede with "the supreme God for the salvation of souls after their transmigration." It is not improbable that the apostle alluded to the Egyptians when he wrote, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Rom. 1. 22, 23.

Viewed in the clear light of Divine revelation, the position of a child of God, dwelling in a land of idolatry, is that of isolation. So also must it be in the light of reason. For the love and reverence of those around him would be expended on what he would deem the inferior creation of God, or merely on the work of human hands; while his adoration, reverence, and love would ascend to a Being supposed by them to be inaccessible to the spirit of man. Such was the position of Joseph in Egypt.

Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob, while in his father's house, had endured the heavy trial of being hated by his brethren, because of that father's love. Gen. 37. 4.

And when Jacob, who also loved his ten elder sons,

37. 13, 14.

sent the cherished Joseph to enquire after their welfare,

Gen. 37. 11, 18-20. His brethren, who before had envied and hated him, then conspired to kill him. They called him the dreamer, but possibly dreaded the fulfilment of his dreams; for Joseph was the eldest son of the wife, and they, like the husbandmen in the parable, "reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours."

Luke 20. 14.

Gen. 37. 21, 22. The murderous design of the brothers was, through the mercy of God, frustrated by Reuben.

87. 23-28. Still their hatred toward Joseph was undiminished, and having cast him into a pit, they sat down to eat bread, and heeded not the anguish of his soul. And when some Midianite merchants passed that way, they thought to escape the sin of murder, and yet rid themselves of their brother, by selling him for a slave. The buyers and sellers agreed on their price of twenty pieces of silver. But they did not remember that the eyes of the Lord were upon them; and as little imagined that the treacherous bargain would be recorded till the end of time.

Prov. 15. 3.

Gen. 37. 29-36. While the Midianite merchants pursued their ordinary course of traffic into Egypt,

87. 28-35. The brethren of Joseph carried home with them seared consciences, defiled hands, a lie on their tongues, and each of them two pieces of silver as the price of his perfidy.

But Joseph, though fettered as a slave, and groaning under a heart of agony which enfeebled every step, and afterwards exposed to the indignities of the slave-market, enjoyed the inestimable blessing of having the Lord for his portion. When in the house of Potiphar, Gen. 39. 1-6. "the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man." "And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand."

In this sudden change from the simple habits and spiritual worship of his father's tents, to the grandeur and elegance of an Egyptian mansion, with its various objects of material worship, his senses were not dazzled, his duties were not neglected, his family affection was not quenched, his faith was not impaired. When falsely Gen. 39. 19, 20. accused by his master's wife, and put in the king's prison, and his feet "hurt with fetters;" when his heart must have burned with indignation that his honoured Psa. 69. 20. master should have believed himself dishonoured—his faithful slave unfaithful, and the God of the Hebrew slave no better than the gods of Egypt. When his heart was thus bowed down with sorrow,

His former blessings were enjoyed; for "the Lord was Gen. 39. 21-23. with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison." "And the keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand, because the Lord was with him, and that which he did the Lord made it to prosper."

While Joseph was in the prison, two of his fellow- Gen. 40. 1-11. prisoners had each a dream, and were sad. Joseph did not lament the apparent failure of his own early dreams,

Psa. 37. 3. and give way to unbelief; but, trusting in the Lord, and
35. 14. conscious that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," he said, "Do not interpretations belong unto God? Tell me them, I pray you."

Gen. 40. 12-19. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, he interpreted the dreams of the butler and baker. And we doubt not, but that when he asked the butler to remember him, his hope was in God, and not in man.
Psa. 42. 5.

Gen. 41. 1-14. After two more years of trial in this his third furnace of affliction, the Lord heard the prayer of his prisoner.
Psa. 69. 33.

105. 19, 20. He caused the butler to remember him, and the king
Gen. 41. 16, 25. to send and loose him. Then Joseph, before the king and the rulers, testified his confidence in the one true Jehovah, saying, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace," and "God hath shewed Pharaoh what He is about to do."

1 Sam. 2. 30. He, who had thus rendered to God the honour due
Gen. 41. 37-46. unto His name, was then honoured by God. For the slave, the prisoner, was set free; the iron fetter was exchanged for the ring and chain of gold, and the prison garment for the "vestures of fine linen," which, in elegance and costliness, in all probability, far exceeded his long-lost coat of many colours. Further, his new dignities were proclaimed abroad, by his riding in the king's second chariot. And in his new sense of freedom, as well as to acquire a knowledge of the kingdom he was appointed to govern, Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. Moreover, the daughter of a priest was given him as a wife: and by this alliance he entered the priestly caste, to which the kings of Egypt always belonged.

Gen. 37. 2. Thus, he who for thirteen years had been faithful as
41. 46. a servant, and faithful when a prisoner, became, for the
47. 28.
Luke 16. 10.

remaining eighty years of his life, a prince and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. He who had been rejected by his brethren, became the regenerator of a Gen. 1:18, 22. mighty kingdom.

The implicit belief with which the king heard the interpretation of his dream by Joseph, the cordial manner in which he received him as the saviour of his country, and accordingly promoted him to its highest honours; also, his munificent reception of the father and brethren of Joseph, for Joseph's sake, might induce us to enquire which of the Pharaohs of Egypt may be associated with so much benevolence. But leaving this for the researches of the learned, we may, from his acts, gather a lesson on the effects of true faith. For while many, who are called Christians, doubt whether they believe in Jesus, Pharaoh could not have doubted whether he believed Joseph; neither could the people of Egypt doubt it, when they saw a slave raised from a dungeon to be a prince, and his word of more authority with Pharaoh than all the directions of the sacred books, which from time immemorial had guided the policy of the state. The faith of Pharaoh was shewn by the honour he paid to Joseph, by his obedience to his word, and by the care he took of his family.

The blessing pronounced upon Abraham, "Thou shalt be a blessing," and, "in blessing I will bless thee," is seen fully resting on the head of Joseph; for he had been a blessing to his master's family, afterwards to his adopted country, to his own family, and to all surrounding nations; and in thus blessing others, he was himself blessed. But this blessing was not fortuitous; it was

in harmony with all the promises of the sacred writings. Slavery and imprisonment are not in themselves blessings. But the man is blessed who endureth temptation, who maketh the Lord his trust and his strength, who "walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly" by whom he may be surrounded, who standeth not in the way of sinners, however enticing, "who is undefiled in his way," who is diligent in his daily duties, who is reviled, persecuted, and hated for righteousness' sake.

James 1. 12.

Psa. 40. 4.

84. 5.

1. 1.

119. 1.

Isa. 32. 20.

Matt. 5. 11.

These benedictions were written for our encouragement; and our faith in them may be strengthened, when we observe how abundantly the Lord poured out His blessings on Joseph for the remainder of his life.

Gen. 41. 47-49.

During the seven years of plenty, when the whole kingdom were rejoicing in the rich produce of their fields, Joseph must have had another source of joy, peculiar to himself, in seeing the word of the Lord thus manifestly accomplishing; and he must have greatly rejoiced in building granaries in all the cities of Egypt, and in storing them. For "Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number."

41. 54-57.

And when "the famine waxed sore in all the land of Egypt," he had the intense satisfaction of opening all the store-houses, and supplying the wants of the hungry multitude who flocked to him, since "all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn."

42. 5. 6.

And as the climax of his happiness, his own brothers and his beloved father came into Egypt to be nourished by the corn which he had stored. Then, too, he saw the fulfilment of his own early dreams; for his "brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him, with their faces to the earth."

And notwithstanding the fulfilment of his dreams, when he must by them have been reminded of his heavenly Father, and of the way by which he had led him, and though he confesses that he feared God; yet the influence of a nine years' intercourse with the priests and the princes of Egypt betrayed itself in his swearing by the life of Pharaoh, and in assuming the power of divination by a cup.

Gen. 42. 9, 15.

Deut. 8. 2.

1 Cor. 15. 23.

Josh. 23. 7.

• Some think his speaking roughly to his brethren alike unjustifiable; but our Lord also proved the faith of the woman of Canaan by using a term of reproach. And Joseph had good reason for endeavouring to ascertain whether his brethren were influenced by the same unholy passions as when they parted; and Simeon he might remember as the instrument of cruelty. So, also, he may have put their money in their sacks, to see whether they would again sell him for money; and, while prompted by brotherly affection, he also tested the spirit of envy when giving the five-fold portion to Benjamin; but no jealousy disturbed their mirth. And when he heard Judah describe his own mother emphatically as the wife of Jacob; when he heard his earnest pleadings that Benjamin might be sent in safety to his father, and when he further heard him offer to remain a captive in his stead, he saw they were ruled by far higher motives than envy, hatred, and the love of money.

Matt. 15. 26.

Gen. 42. 24. 25.
49. 5.

43. 34.

44. 26-34.

The affection of a son and a brother overcame all else. He desired to be alone with these strangers, that he might unfold to them the mystery that he was Joseph their brother. And lest they should not believe so unexpected and wonderful an announcement, he said, "Behold your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother

45. 1-13.

Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you." He had before heard their confession of guilt, and now he hastened to repress any further expression of it, and referred to the preservation of life which God had thus so mercifully effected.

Gen. 45. 14-20. The joy of reconciliation flowed around, for Pharaoh and his servants kindly sympathized in the joy of Joseph and his brethren.

And though Pharaoh had committed the whole kingdom into Joseph's hands, he himself gave the best of the land to the children of Israel, and commanded Joseph to take wagons to bring their little ones, their wives, and their father to settle in Egypt.

46. 1-26.
Ex. 1. 5. Thus Jacob and all his family, a party of seventy souls, were carried into Egypt in the wagons of Pharaoh. "And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his seed with him."

Gen. 46. 28-30. And when informed by Judah of the patriarch's arrival, "Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while."

47. 1-10. As Joseph before desired his brethren to tell his father of all his glory, so now he wishes Pharaoh to see his father and his family. He selected five of his brethren, and among them, we conclude, his brother Benjamin would stand the first, then probably Reuben, who interposed to spare his life; then Judah, whose affectionate appeal had so moved his heart; and the two brethren, whom his mother had accounted as her children. "And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh."

And Pharaoh again conferred on Joseph's family the best of the land of Egypt.

Thus we have seen the way by which God led Israel into the most fertile region of the earth, into the midst of a highly cultivated people, in order to be trained for their high and peculiar vocation of being witnesses for God throughout all the ages of the world's history.

We have also seen how, in the midst of the greatest trials and temptations, the Lord can support and strengthen the man who trusts in Him; and how abundantly He can reward one who fears to sin against Him.

We also see how He sometimes communicates His secrets to His beloved children.

The blessings so largely bestowed on the beloved son of Jacob were, as we have seen, singularly associated with dreams, and with the interpretation of dreams. And the name given to Joseph by Pharaoh signified in Egyptian, "a revealer of secrets," and in Coptic, "the saviour of the world." In after ages, we read of two other men, known as the Lord's especial favourites—"a man greatly beloved," and "the disciple whom Jesus loved," to whom He also revealed His secrets. If we should think such a token of divine love desirable, let us not forget the path of humiliation in which the Lord trained these His favoured ones. Slavery, a den of lions, and banishment to a penal settlement, appear rough roads for the children of the King of kings; but let us mark the path, for we are told, that "narrow is the way which leadeth unto life;" and if we are His children, we can only enjoy true happiness by walking according to His appointment.

Gen. 20. 11.

John 13. 23.

19. 25.

20. 8.

21. 7, 20

Matt. 7. 14.

Having already noticed some resemblance between events in the life of the Son of God, and in those of Isaac and Benjamin, we cannot close the history of Joseph without referring to the abundant analogies to be seen in his life.

In the vicissitudes of Joseph's life, we are reminded that the Lord Jesus left the abode of His Father to seek the lost sons of men; that He "took upon Him the form of a servant;" that He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" that His own nation, the Jews, conspired against Him; that instead of slaying Him with their own hands, they delivered Him over to the Roman power to execute their vengeance; that Jesus was delivered for envy, and sold for thirty pieces of silver; that He not only freely forgave His enemies, and prayed for them, but that His sufferings were the producing cause of their salvation; that He gave His brethren a new commandment, that they should love one another as He had loved them; that to the one doubting disciple He said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hand; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." And that it is also foretold of Him, that at His name "every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" and that in the place of His humiliation He will reign most gloriously. And when the "house of David, of Nathan, of Levi, and of Shimei" shall look on Him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn and be in bitterness of soul. So also was it the desire of our Lord that His family should behold His glory. And can we doubt the accomplishment of His will? Shall we doubt whether Jesus will ever reign over the whole earth, and whether there are yet in prospect days of abundant

Luke 19. 10.

Phil. 2. 7.

Matt. 20. 25-28.

Matt. 27. 18.

26. 15.

John 13. 34.

20. 27.

Phil. 2. 10, 11.

Isa. 24. 23.

Zech. 12. 10-12.

John 17. 24.

joy, honour, and glory for all whom He shall own as His brethren and friends?

But, unlike the honours of Joseph and his brethren, the glory of Jesus will never pass away. For "He Rev. 11. 15 shall reign for ever and ever!"

"YEA, Blessed the dead who have died in the Lord,
Who have walk'd on the earth by the lamp of His word,
Whose light hath so shined with unvarying beam,
That glory through them hath been given to Him:
'Epistles of Christ,' both in word and in deed,
Which the righteous have prized and the thoughtless may read,
They are gone—they are gone—to receive their reward;
Yea, blessed the dead who have died in the Lord."

L. N. R.

Book II.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION TO THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

Man's testimony defaced by sin—God sends a “true and faithful witness”—Believers, as partakers of His righteousness, His witnesses—The five patriarchs witnesses for God—Definition of witness—Human learning not necessary in order to bear testimony—The patriarchs witnessed by their lives as well as by their words—The “two witnesses”—Reciprocity, or love for love, the motive in witnessing for Jesus—Every Christian a witness for Christ.

IN looking back into the vista of ages, to see the gracious and the terrible acts of the Lord our God toward the children of men, and to see their acts toward Him, we have already observed that He has given to His servants the position of witnesses in the earth. While the works of creation, in their measure, witness to the power, wisdom, and benevolence of God—man, as created in His image, had a higher office to fulfil, in shewing forth the holiness and love of God. But man has fallen from his first estate; and though he still retains some marks of his Divine original, he now also bears witness to the power of the evil one,—the adversary of God and man. Yet the purposes of the Most High cannot be frustrated. Forasmuch as His image in man is defaced, He has sent a higher and a more complete image of himself, one in whom “dwelleth all the ful-

Col. 1. 15.
A. 9.

ness of the Godhead bodily,"—a "true and faithful witness" of His justice, His mercy, His holiness, and His love.

Rom. 4. 5. And all who have believed in this witness, even in the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, or who now believe in Him, are by faith made partakers of His righteousness. 2 Pet. 1. 4. They are born of God, and the love of God is 1 John 5. 1. part of their new nature; and of this, which they have 4. 7-21. received by faith and adoption, they can testify to others.

Rom. 4. 3, 9. To shew that this is true of the patriarchs who lived John 8. 56. before the advent of Christ, we would remark, that Job knew there was a Redeemer; that Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to Him for righteousness;" that he saw the day of Christ, and was glad; that his descendants, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, must have had his knowledge orally communicated to them, and that they believed in the God of their father Abraham, and could therefore testify of Him to the world around.

Lest any should think that bearing testimony for God differs from bearing testimony or witness for man, we refer them to the New Testament, where they will find a witness often incidentally described as one who has heard or seen, and relates that which he has heard or seen; or as one who hears and sees, in order to relate. Thus, the apostle Paul was permitted to know, Acts 26. 16. to see, and to hear, in order that he might be a witness for God. 22. 12-15. Ananias said to him, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know His will, and see the Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of His mouth. For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." And John, 1 John 1. 1-3, 5. the intimate friend of his Lord, wrote, that "which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon,

and our hands have handled of the Word of life."
 "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto
 you." So also Jesus, "the faithful and true witness," Rev. 3. 14.
 said, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we John 3. 11.
 have seen; and ye receive not our witness."

And the Old Testament prophets agree with the Deut. 4. 5.
 Apostles of the New Testament in declaring, that they Isa. 1. 1; 2. 1.
 teach or relate the words which they have heard or seen. Eze. 1. 3-8.
 When the Old Testament dispensation was passing Amos 1. 1.
 away, John the Baptist was sent to be a witness that Micah. 1. 1.
 the Messiah, the true light, was about to appear in the Hab. 1. 1.
 world. But of all the examples of verbal witnessing
 for God, there is perhaps none more instructive than
 that depicted in the Gospel of John. To an unlearned, John 20. 17, 18.
 unpretending woman, one whom the world might prob-
 ably have scorned, Jesus said, "Go to my brethren,
 and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your
 Father; and to my God, and your God." The woman
 obeyed,—“Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples
 that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken
 these things unto her.”

In this commission to Mary and its fulfilment, we
 plainly see that the cultivation of the reasoning faculty,
 however desirable in itself, is not an essential qualifi-
 cation for delivering a message, even though it be a
 message from the Lord. The practical question then
 follows,—Are the children of God in the present day
 publicly to receive a message from their heavenly Father,
 if the bearer of such message be unfurnished with their
 own prescribed measure of human learning? Are they
 to hear and to receive a witness for the Lord, if that
 witness be not also a learned logician, an accomplished
 advocate?

We would remark, that it is possible the patriarchs

were logical reasoners concerning the Being and attributes of God, as well as witnesses for Him. The Chaldeans, their contemporaries, studied the orderly motions of the heavenly bodies; and, from their evident obedience to physical law, they may have deduced the logical truth, that law implies a lawgiver; that matter could only move in obedience to arrangements made for it; therefore that Spirit must be the creating, controlling power; and, from the harmony they perceived to exist in creation, they may have deduced the truth, that the one creator and one lawgiver must be one and the same Divine Being. But would men who had seen God, who had heard His voice, who had wrestled with Him and prevailed, be content to prove, by logical deductions, the necessary existence of the Divine Being? The testimony of their lips would be,—We have seen His face; we have heard His voice; we have felt His power. The apostle Paul could and did reason of righteousness and judgment to come; but, as we have observed, his high appointment from God was to be a witness of what he had seen and heard; and what he had seen and heard was the base or foundation of his reasonings.

But, beside the testimony of the lips, a nation or a man—by the circumstances of its or of his existence—may testify to some essential truth, or to some relative prediction. This is fully admitted in the affairs of this life, and there is no greater difficulty in applying it to divine truth and to inspired prophecy.

ISA. 43. 9-12.

The Lord, by His servant Isaiah, appointed the people of Israel to be His witnesses that He was the Lord God, and beside Him there was no Saviour. And whether rejoicing under His smile of love in the holy city of Jerusalem, or scattered by His frown of wrath among the nations of the world, they have been

His witnesses that there is one true living God, and they have been witnesses of His faithfulness alike in judgment and in mercy. Their testimony may have been at times unconscious or unwilling, yet it has been so powerful, that the mere sight of a Jew has often penetrated the doubting heart of man with the conviction that "Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth."

Or a man's life may be the embodiment of the principles which he professes to believe. His faith is to him the evidence of things not seen; his life is to others the testimony of his faith. And for this testimony we now briefly cast our eye over the lives of these five patriarchs. Heb. 11. 1.

Silent, perhaps unconscious, testimony proceeded from Job, when the Lord asked Satan if he had considered His servant Job. Audible testimony, when the patriarch said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;" and when he said, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee."

So the obedience of Abraham, and the blessing which followed, rendered him, consciously or unconsciously, a witness for God. And words spoken but to one earthly auditor, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering," not only refer to the facts immediately before them, but they were a prophecy of a far greater fact, and, as such, conveyed a testimony which must for ever resound in the ears of every child of faith.

And though the life of Jacob did not so clearly witness for God as that of his grandfather, his words tell of that which he has seen and known of God. He testified of God, as the "God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me

all my life long;" as "the Angel which redeemed me from all evil."

His son Joseph was more emphatically a witness for God, both in the prison and in the palace: and possibly at one time the only intelligent witness for the living and true God in all the land of Egypt. His words of testimony are almost those of the psalmist: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." For Joseph said to the king, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." "God did send me before you to preserve life." "God hath made me lord of all Egypt." "My sons, whom God hath given me in this place." Not only did these patriarchs know that God was with them, and watched over them, but those around them also knew it; and in this lay the Lord's testimony to them. Satan said, "Doth Job fear God for nought?" thus admitting that he did fear God.

Psa. 115. 1.

Gen. 21. 22.

Abimelech, king of Gerar, and Phicol, the chief captain of his host, saw that God was with Abraham.

26. 24-28.

Abimelech and Phicol saw that God was with Isaac.

31. 29.

Laban knew that the Lord was with Jacob.

39. 2, 3.
21-23.

Potiphar and the keeper of the prison saw and knew that the Lord was with Joseph.

They witnessed for God on earth, and the Lord gave His testimony for them in the hearts of others on earth.

Rev. 11. 3-12.

Before the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, two witnesses will prophecy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth; they will have power to destroy their enemies by fire from heaven, to prevent rain 'during the twelve hundred and sixty days, to turn waters to blood, and to smite the earth with plagues as often as they will. These two witnesses are to be pre-eminent in

power, yet to be overcome by their enemies, who will kill them, and then triumph over their dead bodies. They will be raised to life, and then ascend to heaven.

We cannot cast our eye over these five patriarchal witnesses, without seeing in them something akin to death, resurrection, and glory, even in their earthly course. The calamities of Job were as a living death; he lost everything; and, when in the presence of the Lord, he lost even his own self-approbation; for he abhorred himself. Then the Lord restored and doubled everything, and gave him power to prevail as an earthly intercessor.

Abraham shewed his willingness to sacrifice everything, even his only son. He became wealthy in this world, and by faith enjoyed the heirship of an earthly and a heavenly country.

Isaac gave up his life, and became heir of this earthly and heavenly inheritance.

The sin of Jacob caused his exile; but by the grace of God he returned to the land of his fathers, and afterwards saw himself the head of a numerous family in the best of the land of Egypt.

Joseph, by the sin of others, was cast into a pit for death; sold as a slave; and afterwards imprisoned without promise of release. He was suddenly raised from prison to the rank and honours of royalty.

So, also, all who are "beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God," shall reign with Christ ^{Rev. 20. 4.} ^{3 Tim. 2. 12.} for a thousand years.

Whether we read of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, confessors, or witnesses, our thoughts must ever turn "to the kindred points of heaven and home." The important question is,—Are we witnesses for God? Do we know Jesus as our own Saviour, as our own friend?

Can we from our own knowledge speak of Him? For we have seen that the qualifications for a witness are personal knowledge; and integrity in relating that which he knows, and in abstaining from relating anything he does not know.

Luke 6. 34, 35.

Our Lord tells us, that to love those who love us deserves no thanks, "for sinners do even the same." Yet loving Him who has first loved us, is the true motive for speaking of Him. And thus, reciprocity or returning like for like, which is one of the instincts of our nature, becomes in this instance ennobled as a spiritual affection.

If a man knows that the Lord Jesus Christ loves him, and has given His life for him, he will not only give the testimony of his lips, but he will delight to employ his time, his money, his every possession, in the service of his loving Saviour. And this one principle of love for love, has in its results led thousands to the fires of martyrdom. That there is forgiveness for failure in testimony is the consolation of every believer; but forgiveness cannot be any encouragement to continued failure. Every Christian will desire more and more earnestly to honour his Lord, by witnessing for Him. And having one heart with the patriarchs of old, he will with them glorify God for ever and ever.

Book III.

CHAPTER I.

"WHY did the paschal beast
Of old for Israel bleed?
To be their safeguard and their feast,
To sprinkle and to feed.

"Dwell not, my searching soul,
On ritual shadows now;
Christ is the Lamb all pure and whole,
The ransom'd first-born thou.

"Now get thine house within,
Slay, eat, anoint thy door;
The dread avenger comes not in
To smite, but passeth o'er.

"He looks, and calls from high,
'Art thou to die or live?'
He hears the posts and lintels cry,
'Forgive, forgive, forgive.'"

S. W. GANDY.

Book III.

CHAPTER I.

MOSES, AND THE DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL FROM EGYPT.

Our increased knowledge of Egypt—God manifesting His power by His judgments on Egypt—Previous message of judgment by Abraham, and of mercy by Joseph forgotten—The missions of Joseph and Moses compared with the two advents of Christ—The Israelites slaves in Egypt—The faith of two Egyptians, and of two Israelites—The training of Moses for the Lord's service—The bush—Controversy between Pharaoh and Moses—The ten plagues of Egypt—Exemption of the Israelites—The Passover—Agreement between some of these events and prophecies concerning the future.

THOUGH in the revolution of time the period of Israel's captivity in Egypt becomes daily more and more remote, the facts connected with it become to our apprehension gradually more and more distinct. The land of Egypt has been visited by thousands of our countrymen. The pyramids which Moses saw have become familiar to the mind of the million; and works of art, which may have been touched by the hand which stretched the rod over the Red Sea, have become the property of our nation, and are still handled by living men. And while modern sages grapple with enigmatical hieroglyphics, in order to decipher the historic lines which Moses may have read; pictures and models reveal to the eye of the unlearned, some idea

of the outward glory and magnificence which met the eye of the enslaved Israelite.

Thus events are now more clearly seen in their relation to surrounding circumstances, and to subsequent and anterior history, and the conduct of persons is more easily compared with our own: and by observing the dealings of the Lord respectively with His people and with His enemies, we may derive the advantages resulting from experience, and foresee how in like manner He will act toward us.

Among contemporary nations, Egypt held a position of pre-eminence for wealth and learning; and on its prosperity the welfare of other nations would in a measure depend. The far-reaching renown of its fine linen would render a failure in its crop of flax a universal loss. Three days of darkness in Egypt would arouse the astronomers and astrologers of Chaldea to an unwonted activity. And a defeat in Egypt's well-trained army would excite the dormant hopes of surrounding nations.

In this highly civilized country, the Lord God of the Hebrews raised up a Pharaoh, upon whom He would shew forth His power, and through whose obduracy His name should be made known throughout the earth. And as by the fame of Egypt the tidings of the judgments and mercies of God would be carried to the remotest habitation of civilized man, so by the writings of Moses the knowledge of those judgments and mercies will be conveyed to the remotest ages of the world's history.

Ex. 9. 16.

While retracing the marvellous works of the Lord, we may remark the consequences which resulted to Egypt from having forgotten those which they had already witnessed. Within the period of their records,

the Lord had twice made himself known in Egypt. First, by judgment on their king, when the honour of His servant Abraham was endangered; and again, by conferring signal blessings through His servant Joseph. But the judgment and the blessing were alike forgotten. And in this instance this historic nation lost the benefit of history. For if the messages conveyed by these strangers, concerning the power of their God to smite and to bless, had been inscribed on the tombs of the kings who then reigned, one Pharaoh would not have destroyed the posterity of these truly great men; and another need not have inquired "Who is Jehovah that I should obey His voice?" The continual exercise of their own despotic rule would have taught them, that the God who had thus shown His power would not lightly suffer His people to be destroyed, or His commands to be disobeyed. And when the messengers of the Lord were forgotten, the traditional truths concerning the God of their great ancestor Noah were more and more corrupted by a symbolizing and materializing religion.

Before commencing the narrative, we may notice an instructive analogy between the missions of Joseph and Moses to Egypt, and the two advents of the Messiah to our sinful world. Joseph was sent to preserve life. He was entirely a messenger of mercy. Moses was sent as the herald of judgment to Egypt, and of deliverance to Israel. They each separately, and together relatively, prefigure the two advents of the Son of God, who first came in great humility to save perishing sinners, and who will hereafter come with great power, to deliver His people, and to execute judgment on His enemies. The blessing conferred by Joseph was forgotten, when the Lord sent Moses as His minister to denounce deso-

lation and woe. May we be preserved from a like forgetfulness. May our lives be continual remembrancers of the Lord's visit of mercy; then His second coming will be to us a day of thanksgiving and joy.

As men of earthly sorrows and joys, the lives of Joseph and Moses have also some links of resemblance. They were both objects of peculiar parental love, they each knew the trial of sudden separation from the home of youth and early manhood; they each resisted the snares of luxury, and suffered affliction for righteousness' sake, before the Lord called them to manifest His great and holy name in the presence of the Pharaohs of Egypt.

In this narrative, we shall see the Lord revealing himself as He would then be known by the Egyptians, and by the Israelites, to the ends of the earth, and as He will be known to the end of time.

Gen. 15. 13.
Ex. 1. 8-14, 22.

In accordance with a prophecy given to Abraham, his seed were strangers in a land not theirs; they were in affliction, and were servants or slaves. They were shrouded in a cloud of sorrow,—their sons were born under a ban of death; for the king of Egypt had decreed that every male child of the Hebrew race should be destroyed.

1. 15-21.

Psa. 33. 18.
147. 11.

But faith shone brightly through the cloud. Among the Egyptian women, there were two who feared God, and the eye of the Lord was upon them; He took pleasure in them, and "dealt well with them."

Ex. 2. 1-6.
Heb. 11. 23.

Among the slaves of Egypt, two are also mentioned, who "were not afraid of the king's commandment;" who, trusting in the Lord, hid their "goodly child" for three months in their own house; and then, amid the

flags of the river's brink, committed him to the watchful eye of their heavenly Father.

How great the blessing on this act of faith, eternity alone can measure. The Lord saw it, accepted it, and sent the king's daughter to save the weeping infant; to adopt him as her son, and, with a mother's tenderness, to surround him with the accessories of learning, and with the associations of high command, to fit him for his future sovereignty.

Not to be the king of Egypt, as she had fondly hoped, but to fit him for a higher dignity,—to be the lawgiver and commander of the children of Israel, or the chosen people of God. And there awaited him a still higher honour, since the Lord himself would train this child to be His friend,—would teach him to count reproach for His sake greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. As His friend He would cause him to reflect the light of His countenance on his fellow-men. As His friend he would be sent from the courts of heaven to cheer Emmanuel on earth. And when before the throne, “the servant of God” will be his title of honour, and the harps of heaven will resound the song of Moses, united with that of the Lamb.

The training for this high service on earth and in heaven began in the humble home of a devout slave. It was carried on during a period of forty years in the palace of Pharaoh, and, during another forty years, in the tents of Jethro, in the shepherd-life of the wilderness. When these eighty years had passed in preparation for his exalted ministry, the Lord came to Horeb, and appeared to Moses “in a flame of fire, out of the midst of the bush.” Moses turned aside to see this great sight. “And when the Lord saw that he turned aside

Ex. 2. 5-10.
Acts 7. 21, 22.

Ex. 33. 11-23.

Heb. 11. 25-27.

Ex. 34. 29, 30.

Luke 9. 30, 31.

Rev. 15. 3.

Acts 7. 23.

7. 30.

Ex. 3. 1-6.

Isa. 6. 2.

to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses." Like the cherubim, in Isaiah's vision, the shepherd of Jethro covered his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

Ex. 3. 6-9.

Yet it was a visit of tenderest mercy from the Lord. He told him He had seen the affliction of His people, He had heard their cry, and He was come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians. He then gave to Moses the great commission for which He had so long been preparing him, saying, "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

3. 11.

Moses, looking to himself instead of to the Lord, replied, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

3. 12-14.

The Lord answered him, "Certainly I will be with thee." Having given him this promise to strengthen his faith, in preparation for a new dispensation of judgment and mercy, the Lord endowed him with miraculous powers, such as had not before been known to man, and sent him on his great embassy to Pharaoh.

4. 1-17.

5. 1.

Then began the mighty controversy between God and Satan, and between their ministers, Moses and Pharaoh, concerning the detention of Israel in Egyptian bondage, or their deliverance from it. Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and delivered the message of the Lord God of Israel, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness."

Pharaoh, in the spirit of the wicked in the days of Job, answered, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." After these words of defiance, he commanded that the Israelites should no longer be supplied with straw, yet that they should bring the same tale of bricks as heretofore. And while thus shewing the power of the words issuing from his own lips, he dared to call the message of the most High, "vain words."

Ex. 5. 2-9.
Job 21. 7, 15.

But the words of the Lord can never be in vain; whether for good or for evil, for mercy or for judgment, they will assuredly be accomplished. And this the Lord now proved to Pharaoh by ten successive plagues.

Yet Pharaoh continually hardened his heart against God. Though from the entreaties of his wise men and of his servants, he six times relented, no sooner was each judgment withdrawn than he again dared to defy the wrath of the Lord.

Ex. 8. 8.
8. 25-28.
9. 27, 28.
10. 7-11.
10. 16-18.
10. 24.

Therefore by plague after plague the Lord destroyed the richest blessings of Egypt. He turned the unequalled water of the Nile into blood. He sent a murrain to kill the cattle, the hail to smite the barley, the locust to devour every fruit of the tree and every green herb, that the hail had left. By these successive plagues, the Lord proclaimed His power over all the gods of Egypt. The Nile and its fish, the frog, the fly, the sacred bull and ram, light, fire, and even darkness, had all been worshipped as symbols of the Deity; and now the cattle were diseased, light departed, and these other gods became the medium of torment. When

Ex. 7. 17-25.
9. 3-6.
9. 23-31.
10. 12-15.

12. 12.
Num. 33. 4.
Ex. 8. 2-6.
8. 24.
9. 3-6.
9. 23, 24.
10. 22.

Job 4. 4.

Ex. 12. 29, 30.

neither bodily discomfort, nor the mental awe occasioned by the judgments inflicted through their gods could move them to obedience, the Lord touched the heartstrings of their domestic affections and the instinct of self-preservation, to impel them to yield to His command. "At midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle." "There was not a house where there was not one dead."

Rev. 15. 4.
Ex 12. 30-33.

Then Pharaoh, roused by the "manifest" judgments of the Lord, "rose up in the night;" he called for Moses and Aaron, "and bade them and the Israelites depart to serve the Lord. He permitted them to take whatsoever they desired; and notwithstanding the urgency with which he would hasten them, he added, "And bless me also." The Israelites departed, but that greatest of blessings, a humble heart, they could not leave to Pharaoh.

Ex. 14. 5-9. 41.

No sooner were they gone than Pharaoh strangely questioned why he had let Israel go. His heart was hardened. "And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him . . . he pursued after the children of Israel . . . and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon." And when the children of Israel went down into the Red Sea, "the Egyptians pursued and went after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen."

Ex. 14. 26-28.

"And the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst

of the sea. And the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them."

While the Lord had been thus manifesting himself in wrath toward Egypt, the bright shining of His face was turned toward Goshen. There, no swarm of noisome creatures was seen, no murrian there consumed both man and cattle, no hail destroyed the herbage, no darkness obscured the dwelling, *no first-born son was slain*. It was to the children of Israel "the year of recompences," "the time to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" it was "the day of vengeance," the year of the redeemed of the Lord, that He, Jehovah the Lord of all, "might be glorified" throughout the earth.

Ex. 8. 22, 23.

9. 6, 7.

9. 26.

10. 23.
11. 7.Isa. 34. 8.
61. 1-3.
63. 4.

When the Lord was about to exempt Israel from the last great plague of Egypt, He required from them a special token of allegiance to himself. He commanded every householder to kill, or to assist in killing, an unblemished lamb; to sprinkle the blood on the two side-posts, and on the upper door-post of the house; to roast it whole; the assembled household were to eat it with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, and to burn with fire whatsoever portion might remain uneaten.

Ex. 12. 1-13.

So comprehensive are the arrangements of God, that this simple feast was at the same time a sacrifice, and a test of the obedience of His people to himself: as such, it became a profession of their faith; and it was a most suitable preparation for the endurance of great bodily fatigue. The paschal lamb was a significant type of

John 1. 29.

the true "Lamb of God," of Him who, by His death, redeems the soul of every man who trusts in Him—who confesses and obeys Him.

Ex. 6. 6.

7. 8.
Josh. 2. 10, 11.
1 Sam. 4. 7, 8.

Ex. 12. 14-20.

The power of the Lord had been shewn in the judgments inflicted upon Pharaoh; and He was thereby made known to Israel, to Egypt, to Jethro, to Rahab, and to the Philistines. And, as an enduring memorial of His faithfulness to His beloved ones, the Lord commanded the feast of the Passover to be celebrated every year, and that the ecclesiastical year of Israel should henceforth commence from *Abib*, the month of this great festival.

12. 18.
34. 18.

Gen. 8. 4.

The feast of the Passover was appointed for the fourteenth day of the seventh month, according to their former computation of time, but of the first month from this new era; and it was to last until the twenty-first day of the same month. It is an interesting coincidence, that the Ark had rested on Mount Ararat on the seventeenth day of the seventh month *Abib*, the third day after the slaying of the lamb. The Israelite, who is also a believer in the Lord Jesus, may at the same time commemorate three great events in which he is severally interested:—the blessing common to the whole race of man, the resting of Noah on the renewed earth; the national blessing of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt; the personal blessing of redemption from sin by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. These blessings of far distant ages, thus combined, may well conspire to raise in his soul an anthem of unequalled honour, praise, and glory, to Him whose love is from everlasting to everlasting. And, while remembering what God has done for His people, shall we not anticipate that He will always exactly and abundantly bestow all that He has promised, and fulfil all that He

has foreshewn? By his servants the prophets, he has Dan. 11. 35, 45. foretold that a king will arise, who shall in power and self-will resemble the Pharaoh of this history. It is said of this king, that he "shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished;" that "he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." And at that time "the wise Dan. 12. 1-3. shall shine as the brightness of the firmament." And we may remember that it is said, "The Lord shall Isa. 11. 11-15. 27. 12. set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people which shall be left from Assyria and from Egypt." And that "the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with His mighty wind shall He shake His hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod," or in shoes, as we find it in the margin. We believe Jesus to be the Angel who, in the wilderness, guided Israel by a pillar of fire and of cloud; and we venture to associate with past facts a prophecy concerning future events. The apostle tells us, that when the Lord descends from heaven, "We 1 Thess. 4. 16-18 which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (the dead saints) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air," and adds, "And so shall we ever be with the Lord." And in full agreement with the facts of Israel's deliverance and with the prophecy of the apostle, we read the parable of our Lord, in which a sudden Matt. 25. 1-10. change is represented as taking place in the condition of parties living together. There is a midnight cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh," and those to whom the world is as bondage go forth to meet Him, while those to whom it is a home are left in sorrow.

The children of Israel were delivered from Egypt by the immediate power of God ; they were conducted through the wilderness by the Lord himself, until they reached the land of Canaan, which was to be their everlasting possession. Since these realities of the past agree in many of their details with the prophecies concerning future events, we see in them a brief forecasting of the future. And if we enjoy spiritual fellowship with the God of Israel, may we not rejoice in these facts of the past, not only for the blessings then conferred on man, and for the glory of God thus made known to the world, but as earnest of our own eternal portion ?

Book III.

CHAPTER II.

"COME, brothers, let us onward,
Night comes without delay,
And in this howling desert,
It is not good to stay.
Take courage, and be strong,
We are hasting on to heaven,
Strength for warfare will be given,
And glory won ere long.

The Pilgrim's path of trial,
We do not fear to view ;
We know His voice who calls us,
We know Him to be true.
Then let who will condemn,
But, strong in His almighty grace,
Come, every one, with steadfast face,
On to Jerusalem !"

GERHARD TERSTEEGEN.

Book III.

CHAPTER II.

THE JOURNEY FROM EGYPT TO SINAI.

Retracing the steps of Israel—Facts illustrate principles—Divine conduct toward Israel before and after the giving of the law—The Israelites murmur—The Red Sea divided for them—They murmur—The water of Marah made sweet—They murmur—Are fed with manna—They murmur again—Water from the rock provided—Amalek—This period a day of grace.

To walk in the steps of the children of Israel, to look upon the rocks which obstructed their path, the sea through which they passed, the Horeb on which Moses dwelt with God for forty days, and the desert in which they wandered for forty years, has become a favourite pursuit with the intelligent and enterprising traveller. And to read the word of God on the spot on which He spake to man has been regarded as one of the greatest of Christian luxuries,—as an effectual means of impressing the truth of the word on the mind of the reader.

There is a higher enjoyment, a stronger confirmation of the truth of the facts depicted. That higher enjoyment and stronger confirmation must be in our own hearts, to hear the voice of the Lord, and to feel His guidance in all the difficulties which obstruct our path,

We have seen that the deliverance from Egypt was a fact then known to distant nations; and that several incidents of that fact remarkably coincide with events which are foretold, but which as yet remain unfulfilled. The journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness is also often used to illustrate the progress of the individual Christian from the bondage and corruption of this world to a state of rest and peace with God.

In the Lord's determination to bring His people out of Egypt, and in the desire of a powerful monarch to hold them in bondage, we may see illustrated a controversy which is still carried on between God and Satan for empire in the heart of man. Its battle-field is the world. Throughout its length and breadth, God will ultimately prove himself victorious, defeat Satan, and teach man loyally to serve Him as his Lord.

Luke 11. 21, 22.

Ex. 8. 25-28.

10. 11.

10. 24-26.

2 Cor. 6. 17.

Compelled by One stronger than himself, Pharaoh said, "Go ye, sacrifice to your God *in the land.*" But Israel could not sacrifice the abominations of the Egyptians before their eyes. And when Moses demanded a three days' journey into the wilderness, Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; *only ye shall not go very far away.*" He would next allow the *men* to go, feeling sure of their return if they left their wives and little ones behind. When more sorely pressed by the judgments of God, he advanced one step farther, *only stipulating for the retention of their flocks and herds, as a last hope that their worldly possessions might still bind their hearts to Egypt.* But Moses required the cattle of Israel to offer in sacrifice to God; he would not leave an hoof behind: they must all come out and be separate. And the Lord brought them out

of Egypt with "a mighty hand and an outstretched arm."

On that memorable night, the Israelites, rejoicing in their approaching deliverance and in their anticipated blessings, were feasting and preparing for their departure; while the Egyptians were loudly bewailing their dead, and preparing the rites of sepulture. And on the morrow, six hundred thousand men of Israel, beside women and children, left the "treasure cities" they had built in Goshen, and all their great works in Egypt, and went out with a high hand, in the sight of all the Egyptians. "A mixed multitude also went up with them, and flocks, and herds, and very much cattle." The Lord "brought them forth with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes."

Ex. 12. 21-23.

Is. 29. 36.

I. 11.

Num. 33. 3.

Psa. 105. 37.

Yet, when Israel saw the Red Sea before them, the Egyptians behind, and the wilderness on either side, they looked not at the power of the Lord, which had been so wonderfully exhibited on their behalf, but "said unto Moses,—Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?"

Ex. 14. 10-12.

Moses, knowing the mind of the Lord, gave to their unbelief this animating reply:—"Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will shew you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." "And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out

Ex. 14. 13-31.

thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea."....."And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea: and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left." Then the chosen people understood the loving-kindness of the Lord towards them. Then, they celebrated His triumphs in timbrels and dances; they rejoiced in the manifestation of His glorious power; and in their joy they sang, "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever."

EX. 15. 1-21.

15. 22, 23. After praising God in this triumphal song, Moses led the children of Israel three days' journey into the wilderness without finding water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter.

15. 24. "And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

15. 25-27. "And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee. And

they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and three score and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters."

Notwithstanding their recent experience of the Lord's Ex. 16. 1-3. mercy in His healing the waters of Marah: and in His giving a rich supply of water, and of refreshing shade at Elim, the Israelites thought, that when their Egyptian stores should be exhausted, they would die of hunger. They accused Moses of bringing them into the wilderness to kill them. "They said, Can God furnish a table Psa. 78. 19 in the wilderness?"

The Lord proved that He could provide for all their Ex. 16. 4-35. wants. He said, "Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no." "At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat."

The manna ceased when Israel entered Canaan, but the lesson of dependance upon God for the supply of the bodily wants of those who walk in the path of His

appointment is suited to all times. And He who supplies the bodily wants of those who cry to Him, will as freely and bountifully supply their spiritual wants.

John 6. 31-58.

Thus the Lord Jesus has said, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." In the message to the church of Pergamos, the same figure is adopted, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna."

Rev. 2. 17.

Ex. 17. 1.

When the children of Israel arrived in Rephidim, their faith was again tried by the want of water.

17. 3.

They "murmured against Moses and said. Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?"

17. 4-6.

Moses took this trouble to Him who had said, "Certainly I will be with thee." The Lord now commanded him to take his rod with which he smote the river, and added, "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel." In the words of the Psalmist, "He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river."

Psa. 105. 41.

1 Cor. 10. 4.

The Lord Jesus appropriated the manna as a figurative representation of himself. The apostle Paul gave to the rocks a like spiritual signification. He illustrated the blessings flowing from Christ by the blessings of

the abundant life-giving stream. The evangelical prophet Isaiah also proclaims a universal invitation to Gospel blessings under this figure. He writes, "Ho, ^{Isa. 55. 1-3.} every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." And at the feast of tabernacles, "Jesus stood and cried, ^{John 7. 37.} saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." So, too, in the Apocalypse, "He that sat upon the throne said, I will give unto him that is athirst of ^{Rev. 21. 5, 6.} the fountain of the water of life freely." And the Spirit and the Bride reiterate the strain, saying, "Come." ^{22. 17.} "Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

In the next incident of the journey, we see the anger of the Lord against the enemies of Israel, and His blessing accompanying the intercessory prayer of His servant.

Amalek, the descendant of Esau, sinned against the ^{Ex. 17. 8.} Lord, in smiting Israel when he was feeble and weary. "He feared not God." ^{Deut. 25. 17, 18.}

Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the ^{Ex. 17. 13-16.} edge of the sword. And the Lord said unto Moses, "..... I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

While Joshua and his chosen men fought, Moses ^{17. 9-12.} prayed; and so effectual was his intercession, that "when Moses lifted up his hand, Israel prevailed: and ^{Ja. 5. 16.} when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed." And when, from his weariness, the Lord's host was endan-

gered, Aaron and Hur supported his hands until the going down of the sun.

In the brief record of the first three months of the wilderness journey, we remark the absence of all correcting discipline; and we further find the bestowment of manna, and of the living water which issued from the rock. And as we have been taught to consider one as a figurative representation of Christ, and the other of the blessings flowing from Him, so we are induced to consider this period as emphatically a day of grace, one in which the heavenly Father watched with peculiar tenderness the distresses of His children, and in which He richly supplied their wants as soon as felt, delaying to instruct their minds and discipline their conduct, until He had thus further proved His compassionate care for them. The words of the psalmist would have peculiarly suited an Israelite, in contemplating the history of his people for these three months. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed." Jehovah of Israel "remembereth that we are dust." Jesus Christ, in His hour of sorrow, excused the drowsiness of His disciples by saying, "The flesh is weak." He now gives to us a day of grace, "a day of salvation," a period for willing severance from sin, that it may be for us the harbinger of an eternal separation from all evil,—of eternal grace, and of eternal glory.

Ps. 103. 2-6, 14.

Matt. 26. 41.

2 Cor. 5. 2.

Book III.

CHAPTER III.

"THE law commands and makes us know
What duties to our God we owe ;
But 'tis the gospel must reveal
Where lies our strength to do His will."

WATTS.

"THE atoning work is done :
The Victim's blood is shed :
And Jesus now is gone
His people's cause to plead :
He stands in heav'n their great High Priest,
And bears their names upon His breast.

"He sprinkles with his blood,
The mercy-seat above :
For justice had withstood
The purposes of love :
But justice now objects no more :
And mercy yields her boundless store.

"No temple made with hands,
His place of service is :
In heav'n itself He stands :
An heav'nly Priesthood His.
In Him the shadows of the law
Are all fulfill'd, and now withdraw.

"And though awhile He be
Hid from the eyes of men,
His people look to see
Their great High Priest again :
In brightest glory He will come,
And take His waiting people home."

KELLY.

Book III.

CHAPTER III.

THE LESSONS FROM MOUNT SINAI.

The Lord in Sinai as a King—The Ten Commandments—More detailed legislation, with penalties and promises—Special directions given for the construction of the Tabernacle, and for the clothing and consecration of the Priests—In the absence of Moses, the people make a calf, and worship it—Pardon granted at the intercession of Moses—Relative succession of events—The communion of Moses with God—The Commandments written a second time—The Tabernacle built by the willing-hearted and the wise-hearted—The expiation of sin—The festivals and their antitypes—Love, hope, and fear employed to bring man into fellowship with God.

MOUNT Sinai concentrates around its summit the remembrance of the justice and mercy of God, of the sin, and the renewed righteousness of man. There, the law was given, and penalties were affixed to its violation; there also sacrificial rites for atonement and reconciliation were proclaimed. While at its base a grievous transgression was enacted; and this sin occasioned such self-sacrificing intercession from Moses, as proved him to be a man "after the image of Him that created him"—a Christ-like man. The punishment which followed this idolatry, and the continued guidance and protection of Israel, also tell of judgment and mercy. Before the Lord anew reveals His terrible power, His majesty, and His sovereign authority, He addresses

Eph. 4. 23, 24.
Col. 3. 10.
Ex. 19. 1-6.

words of fatherly kindness to His beloved people. He will bind their hearts to himself, by reminding them of His recent acts of power in their behalf, saying, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

Ex. 19. 7-24.
20. 18.
Deut. 5. 22.
Heb. 12. 18-21.

The presence of the Lord, the Creator and Sovereign of heaven and earth, was manifested in fire, and "blackness, and darkness, and tempest," with the sound of the rolling thunder and of the trumpet, which became louder and louder. Then "Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice." He directed that bounds should be set about the mount, that neither priest nor people should approach His Divine Majesty. He claimed the obedience of Israel, yet again, he prefaced the words of law and authority by recalling to their remembrance, that He had brought them out of the house of bondage. He cannot absolve them from the fulfilment of their duty; while he will not dispense with the motive of love. "The First and Second Commandments enjoin obviously the Divine veneration with the heart, the Third with the word, and the Fourth with the deed. The decalogue begins with the heart and ends with the heart; for this is the only source of our actions and our thoughts; as, on the other hand, all our actions and all our thoughts redound to the heart, and stamp it with their impress;—there is an eternal reciprocity between our feeling, thinking, and acting." "With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation."

Ex. 20. 1-17.

Kalisch.

Rom. 10. 10.

Besides the Ten Commandments, the Lord gave Israel some detailed expressions of His mind concerning the relations between man and man, the claims of the bond-servant, the restitution of a neighbour's injured property, and the regard to be paid to that of an enemy. To the transgression of these laws He affixed certain punishments or penalties, and for obedience to them He promised His protection, and the supply of their daily wants.

Ex. 21.
22. 1-15.
23. 4. 5.
23. 22-31.

After receiving these laws, "Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do."

24. 1-8.

Again Moses went up into the mount, and the Lord gave specific directions for building a tabernacle, in which, from off His mercy-seat, He might commune with His servants; and He added minute directions respecting the clothing and consecration of Aaron and his sons as His priests.

24. 12-18.
25-34 chs.

While the Lord was thus providing a way of access to himself, the Israelites considered themselves forgotten. In this prolonged absence of Moses, they knew not what was passing in the presence-chamber of the Eternal. They had no eye of faith with which to penetrate the cloud which covered the Mount. They no longer heard the voice of Moses pleading with God, nor declaring the words of the Lord: to their apprehension they had lost their mediator. They no longer saw Moses leading their hosts, nor directing the internal arrangements of the camp; they felt their need of a guide.

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to

Ex. 32. 1-6.

Deut. 9. 11-12. come down out of the Mount, the people gathered themselves unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for, as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." Whether the gods they desired were to be fashioned according to some lingering tradition of the cherubim outside of Eden, or according to the symbols of Egypt, we cannot determine: but all the people contributed their golden ornaments; Aaron the brother of Moses wrought these ornaments into a golden calf; and this calf was declared to be the god which had brought them out of the land of Egypt. "And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, To-morrow is a feast unto the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." Though this was called a feast unto the Lord, though it was held under high earthly authority, and was the result of an extensive combination of the people, it was nevertheless an act of unbelief, of sin against the royal authority of God, of disobedience to His command.

Ex. 32. 7-28, 35.
Deut. 9. 12-21.

The Lord, then, in righteous indignation disowned Israel as His people. He "said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. . . . Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them." "When Israel had ceased to look for the return of their appointed mediator and guide, he came; but they could not welcome his approach, for he came in anger. He brought with him the two tables of testimony. "And

the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." Notwithstanding, he cast "these tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the Mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." And he commanded those who were on the Lord's side to slay the idolators: "and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." "And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him."

So great was the love of Moses toward Israel, that he fasted forty days and forty nights before the Lord. He confessed that their sin was a very great sin; and he was willing, if the Lord could not otherwise forgive it, that his own name should be blotted out of the book of God. He entreated the Lord to spare them for the sake of His oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and lest His name should be blasphemed by the Egyptians. And the Lord hearkened unto Moses, and he "repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people." He directed this faithful servant to lead Israel to the place of which He had spoken, and promised that His angel should go before them.

Ex. 32. 11-14,
29-34.
Deut. 9. 19,
25-29.

It is both interesting and instructive to observe the order in which events are presented to us. After the obedience of Abraham in circumcising his household, the next event was a visit from the Lord, with two attendant angels. After Moses had been with the Lord in the Mount, we find he is willing to sacrifice himself for the honour of God and the welfare of His people; and after offering himself for the sin of the nation,

we read his personal intercourse with God in the tabernacle. The Lord Jesus said in reference to himself, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." And as a principle of general application, He added, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

Ex. 33. 7-22.

Such was the condescension of the God of Israel, that when His people were dwelling in tents, He himself would have a tent to dwell in. Before the erection of the prescribed Tabernacle, Moses had taken a tent "and pitched it without the camp afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the Tabernacle of the congregation And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle. . . . And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." In this communion between God and man, the servant reminds his Lord of His commands and promises: he entreats that the Lord would direct him in His way, as a proof that he had found grace in His sight, and that he might know Him and consider that Israel was God's people. And the Lord said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And Moses said unto Him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And

the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And He said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And He said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by."

The Lord promised to write the law again on tables of stone, and when Moses took the tables up to Mount Sinai, "The Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation."

Moses returned from Mount Sinai; and though he knew it not, his face shone, and the children of Israel were afraid to come near him; therefore, when he spake to them, he put a vail on his face, but when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he took the vail off until he came out.

In proclaiming the law, God had sought the heart-

Ex. 34. 1-7, 28.

34. 29-35.

Ex. 35. 4-10.

worship of His people; so now, in the construction of the tabernacle, He must have their heart-service. "This is the thing which the Lord commanded, saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it.....And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that the Lord hath commanded." "Both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted," brought an offering unto the Lord. They brought "much more than enough for the service of the work which the Lord commanded to make." And within eight months, those to whom the Lord had given wisdom prepared every part of the tabernacle for its immediate erection.

35. 31-35.

36. 1-8.

40.

Num. 9. 15-23.

On the first day of the second year this tabernacle of the Lord was reared; and on the same day the pillar of cloud covered it. "And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up."

"For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys."

It is worthy of remembrance, that amid all their journeyings, they only once rebelled against the direction of the Lord, as intimated by the cloud. His commands were then conveyed through His servant Moses, and the position of the cloud at that time is not mentioned.

Lev. 1. 1.

From the new tabernacle of the congregation, the Lord revealed His will concerning the expiation of sin. This revelation is contained in the book of Leviticus;

and, in order that the Israelites should continually remember Him who had commanded the sacrifices, the words, "The Lord spake unto Moses," are repeated thirty times. This frequent repetition should impress upon the mind of both Jew and Gentile that God requires sacrifice for sin, and that He himself must appoint, as well as accept, the offering.

He commanded that unblemished animals of certain kinds should be slain as offerings for sin,—as trespass-offerings, peace-offerings, and as burnt-offerings. Thenceforth, when any man felt the burden of sin, he was to bring the appointed animal to the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle,—to lay his hand upon its head, and thus in figure transmit his sin; he was then to slay the bullock, the ram, or the goat; the priest was to sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar; and this sacrifice the Lord was pleased to accept instead of the death of the transgressor. If the whole congregation had sinned against the Lord, though it were through ignorance, in like manner they were to bring their offering,—and the elders of the congregation were to lay their hands upon the head of the sacrifice which was to bear away their sin. In these rites, hundreds of thousands of bullocks, goats, and rams, must have been slain for human transgressions.

Beside special sacrifices for special sins, God commanded daily, weekly, and monthly sacrifices to be offered for the ordinary sins of the people. He also appointed one septennial and three yearly festivals, and one, called the feast of jubilee, which was to be held every fiftieth year.

As the sacrifices were not complete in themselves, but were anticipatory types of His own sacrifice, so these festivals, and the day of atonement, were typical

Lev. 4.
5, 6, 7.
3-
1.
1, 2-9.
3, 2.

4, 3-5.
19, 21.
16, 8.

14, 13-21.

Num. 28, 1-15.

Lev. 23.

of subsequent events relating to Himself and to His people.

Ex. 12. The manifestation of their antitypes fully proved that the Passover and Pentecost each prefigured something beyond itself. In the celebration of the Passover, or feast of unleavened bread, a lamb was to be slain, was to be roasted, and to be eaten; its blood was to be sprinkled on the door-posts; and then, every Israelite under the shelter of that blood was saved from immediate destruction. In the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, this type was fulfilled; and complete security is conferred on all who, by faith, feed on Him, and on whom the blood manifestly appears.

1 Cor. 5. 7. On the day after the Sabbath, the first-fruit sheaf was waved before the Lord. On the morning after the Sabbath, Christ arose from the dead "as the first-fruits of them that slept,"—the perfect first-fruit sheaf of the coming harvest.

Lev. 23. 10-14. Fifty days after the Passover Sabbath, the Pentecost was to be celebrated. In this feast, two first-fruit loaves were to be baked with leaven, and to be waved before the Lord, accompanied by a sin-offering and a peace-offering. This type was fulfilled when, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were presented before the Lord, both Jew and Gentile, as the first-fruit bread, consisting of a multitude of bruised grains of wheat, mingled with the leaven of human corruption, yet redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, and sanctified by the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 2.

Jas. 1. 18.
1 Cor. 10. 17.

And, seeing such a correlative agreement of time and circumstances between these festivals and their antitypes, may we not also expect to see a similar agreement between the remaining festivals and their antitypes?

Lev. 23. 23-25. Five months were to elapse before the celebration of

another feast. On the first day of the seventh month of the ecclesiastical year, which was the first day of the civil year, a new year's festival was to be observed; it was called a "memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation." On the tenth day of the same month, a Lev. 23. 26-32. day of sorrow was to be observed; it was called "a day of atonement." And after another five days, only fifteen 23. 33-43. days after the blowing of trumpets, the feast of tabernacles—the harvest feast—was celebrated. The great 25. 8-24. fifty-year festival, the jubilee, was to commence on the day of atonement. Then the trumpet was to sound throughout the land, proclaiming liberty to every man to return to his hereditary possessions, and to his family. Above eighteen hundred years have passed since the fulfilment of the prophecies contained in the Passover and Pentecost; should we not, therefore, expectingly await the sounding of the trumpet? and shall we not after that expect a great day of atonement, when every 1 Cor. 15. 52.
Zech. 9. 14.
12. 10. tribe of Israel shall mourn and be in bitterness for Him whom they have pierced, when "all kindreds of the Rev. 1. 7. earth shall wail because of Him?" And do we need reminding that specific prophecies concerning a world- Zech. 14. 16-21. wide celebration of the feast of tabernacles remain unfulfilled,—that there will be, though we know not when, a great harvest of the whole earth,—a universal harvest home,—an incomparable festival,—when all nations, Matth. 13. 39-43.
Rev. 14. 15. kindreds, people, and tongues will, with one voice, and in a pure language, ascribe "Salvation to our God which 7. 9, 10. sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

When we see that the sacrifices and the feasts, which were in themselves realities to the Israelites, are also earnestness of future events, they become invested with a definite personal interest most instructive and congenial to the heart of man. Thus the Lord our God, in His

infinite mercy, gave us not merely a verbal sketch of the future, but a material, substantial portraiture. In His dealings with a chosen nation, and with their enemies, He has shewn us how He will act toward the whole world. We there see atonement for sin, a blessing on trust and obedience, and wrath on unbelief and disobedience. Having manifested His love toward them, He would allure them by hope, and impel them by fear, into the high privilege of communion with Himself. By redeeming love, by hope and fear, Christ would constrain His redeemed children into holy fellowship with Himself; and He will present them faultless before God at the great festival, the climax of earth's glories, when they will receive "a kingdom which cannot be moved."

Jude 24.

Heb. 12. 24-28.

Book III.

CHAPTER IV.

Come, gladly let us onward,
Hand in hand still go,
Each helping one another
Through all the way below.
One family of love,—
Oh, let no voice of strife be heard,
No discord, by the angel-guard
Who watch us from above.

Oh, brothers! soon is ended
The journey we've begun;
Endure a little longer,
The race will soon be run.
And in the land of rest,—
In yonder bright, eternal home,
Where all the Father's loved ones come,
We shall be safe and blest.

GERHARD TERSTEEGEN.

Book III.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WILDERNESS JOURNEY FROM SINAI.

Rapid succession of events in a brief space of time—The measurement of time—The moral results of prodigies compared with the patient discipline of years—The rebellions not universal—The children of Israel numbered—They murmur—Fire is sent to consume them—They murmur—Quails sent in anger—The jealousy of Aaron and Miriam—The twelve spies—The unbelief of the Israelites—Their journey in the wilderness prolonged—The rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—The people murmur—A plague is sent—They murmur—The sin of Moses—The death of Aaron—The manna is loathed—Fiery serpents—The Brazen Serpent—The Amorites: Og, king of Bashan, and his people destroyed—Balak and Balaam—Israel tempted to sin—A curse follows—Phinehas makes atonement, and is blessed—Concluding events—Before the law was given, a season of mercy; afterwards of judgment—Sins of the people, and of the princes and Levites—A complete sacrifice.

THE flight of time is a frequent topic of thought or of speech; but there are periods when the rapid succession of events seems to outrun the velocity of time. After Moses had lived for forty years amid the tranquil occupations of the wilderness, he is again in Egypt, at the centre of empire and activity, and days and nights are teeming with events. His first appearance before Pharaoh was signalized by a miracle: his rod became a serpent. During seven days the water of Egypt was turned to blood. Another plague was threatened and

executed on the morrow. Then one, for which there was no delay of threatening. Again Moses was in the early dawn before Pharaoh, and on the following day a new plague was inflicted. Then another is threatened, and to be executed on the morrow. Again a plague has no preceding threatening. The early morning is again chosen for the announcement of a plague, which was to be executed the next day. Another is threatened for a morrow's anguish. Three days are sufficient for overpowering darkness. And when the Israelites are prepared for departure, at midnight a cry is heard, and all the first-born of Egypt are slain. One solemn interval, between sun-set and sun-rise, completes the miracles of wrath, and secures the deliverance of Israel. On the morrow, the host of Israel departed from Egypt. The length of time during which these terrific plagues were acting on the sinful passions of men is not stated; but since the seventh and tenth plagues may both have been inflicted in the month of March; and since five plagues were inflicted the day after they were threatened, and two, without previous threatening; and since the time occupied by three plagues was severally seven days, three days, and one brief hour of midnight, we conclude that no great interval of time elapsed between the appearance of Moses in Egypt, and the departure of the children of Israel from it. And in three months after the Passover deliverance, the whole congregation of Israel had walked through the Red Sea; had been fed by miracle; and had witnessed the terrific splendours of Mount Sinai. While there, Moses had received the moral law; and, in another nine months, the children of Israel had constructed a tabernacle for worship. From this tabernacle, filled with the Divine presence, Moses received directions respecting various sacrifices

for the forgiveness of sins. And the people rested thirty days to commemorate the Passover, and all the wonders of these unrivalled fifteen months.

Shall time be reckoned by its flight, or by the fruits resulting from the facts accomplished in its flight? Its flight may be measured on earth,—the fruits can only be fully computed in heaven. Yet, of various events of earth, we may ask, “What report they bore to heaven?”

From a short summary of the rebellions of Israel, during the forty years’ wandering, we may compare the effect produced on the mind of man by prodigies, with the results of the protracted discipline of daily trials and daily mercies. In the first three months after the stupendous miracles of the exodus, the Israelites rebelled five times against the Lord; in the next twenty-one months, they also rebelled five times; while during the following eight and thirty years, only four open rebellions are recorded. Do we not here see fruits of faith and patience, of reverence and obedience, which have been developed in time?

A promise had been given to Abraham, that his seed should be numerous as the stars of heaven. The family of Jacob, on whom these promises especially rested, had, in the period elapsing between their arrival in Egypt and their departure from it, increased from seventy souls Gen. 46. 27. to six hundred and three thousand five hundred and Num. 1. 46. fifty adult men, which number, including an average proportion of women and children, would amount to about two million souls. Thus rapidly was the promise of God fulfilling: and the further progress or delay in its fulfilment may be considered, respectively, a token of the favour or of the anger of God. This may be seen by observing the passages where the locality of the murmurings is indicated. The special plagues

on Israel were inflicted for special sins; and accordingly we shall find that where the murmuring existed, there would be the decrease of numbers in the tribes. In the southern quarter of the camp, occupied by Reuben, Gad, and Simeon, a total loss of forty-five thousand and twenty men, above twenty years of age, was sustained between the first and last numbering in the wilderness. Of that number, thirty-seven thousand and one hundred were of the tribe of Simeon,—that tribe which was alone excepted when Moses pronounced his parting blessings. Ephraim and Naphtali each lost eight thousand men. They are not named among the murmurers, but may have been those that are mentioned as “in the uttermost parts of the camp.” Notwithstanding this great decrease in five of the tribes, and the death of all the adults during their wanderings, the nation had only sustained a total loss of one thousand eight hundred men when they entered Canaan. We may therefore conclude that a special blessing rested on the remaining seven tribes, and that the trial of their faith through their divers temptations in these long quiet years had brought forth the fruits of patience; and their blameless career under Joshua intimates the perfecting of that patience.

Thus, while we should have anticipated greater spiritual results from the wondrous works of the Lord, we find that holy reverence and obedience were not most plainly manifested after the display of miracles, but were the slow growth of many years of the patient discipline of their heavenly Father. And whether He desolates one nation at the midnight hour, or trains another through forty years, or through centuries of trial, the ultimate end of all, even His own eternal glory, must be accomplished.

Num. i. 20-25.
26. 7-18.

i. 33, 43.
26. 37, 50.

26. 51.

We now return to the details of Israel's history, in which we shall see the correcting discipline and fatherly care of God over His beloved people. "And the Lord Num. 1. spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls; from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel. Thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies; and with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers." The number of men belonging to each tribe is first stated,—then repeated in connection with its local Num. 2. position in the camp. Twenty days after the command was given to number the people, "the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of testimony." And the children of Israel "departed from the Mount of the Lord three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey Deut. 1. 30-33. to search out a resting-place for them. And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp." "And the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran."

Notwithstanding the many distinct manifestations Num. 11. 1. the loving-kindness of the Lord, the people again murmured.

"And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it, and His anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and con-

sumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp."

Num. 11. 2. "And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched."

11. 4-6. "And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? we remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes."

11. 10, 31-34. "The anger of the Lord was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased." "And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague. And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted."

Num. 10. 31.
Ex. 18. 13-18.
Num. 11. 11-22. Moses had relied on his father-in-law for assistance in directing the encampments of the wilderness, but soon afterwards he, according to the suggestion of Jethro,

complained that the burden of caring for all the people was too much for him.

The Lord had always imparted His Holy Spirit to His servant, according to the measure of responsibility laid upon him. And now "the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease." The meek and loving Moses rejoiced in this transference of the Lord's Spirit from himself to others. Num. 11. 24-29.

Aaron, the high priest and elder brother of Moses, thus doubly honoured, and Miriam their sister, a prophetess and leader in the timbrel and dance, felt themselves aggrieved by the arrival of the Ethiopian wife of Moses. Whether that wife was Zipporah, daughter of Jethro the priest, or the Ethiopian princess of Jewish tradition, it is not necessary to determine. Luke 15. 2.
Acts 11. 1-3.

In their jealousy they said, "Hath the Lord spoken only by Moses? hath He not spoken also by us?" Num. 12. 1-3.

"And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth." He then shewed them the honour by which He distinguished Moses above all others, and added, "Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them;" 12. 4-10.

and He departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow." And she was "shut out from the camp seven days."

Num. 12. 11-15. Moses, who wished that all the Lord's people were prophets, now cried unto the Lord in behalf of his sister, saying, "Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee." In answer to his prayer, after seven days Miriam was received into the camp, "and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again."

13. 1-23. When the children of Israel arrived at the border of Canaan, Moses sent twelve men, rulers of their tribes, to spy out the land.

13. 23-27. At Eshcol, as a proof of the Lord's faithfulness, they "cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates and of the figs;" and said, in the words of the promise "Surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it,"

Num. 14. 1-4. Nevertheless, the unbelieving hearts of the people could not enjoy the present blessing. On the threshold of possession, they desired a grave in Egypt, or in the lonely desert. So mad was their unbelief, that, while they rejected their promised inheritance, and the guidance of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, they desired another captain to lead them back to the land of bondage.

14. 11, 12. This unbelief provoked again the anger of the Lord. And He, who confided to Abraham His purposes toward Sodom, now spoke to Moses of smiting His beloved

Israel with pestilence, and of making Moses a greater and mightier nation than they.

But the glory of the Lord, the honour of His name, was Num. 14. 13-29. then linked with the prosperity of Israel. And Moses approached the Most High with greater confidence than Abraham had been able to exercise; for he could plead the promise of the Lord, and could say, "I beseech Gen. 18. 17-33. thee, let the power of my Lord be great, *according as thou hast spoken.* The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word."

The Lord had declared that He could by no means Num. 14. 23-29. clear the guilty; and for this fearful provocation, He now prolonged the wilderness journey to forty years,—a year for each day of unbelieving search. The men who had brought up an evil report of the land were smitten by an immediate plague from the Lord. And, before the termination of the forty years' wandering, all 26. 65. the men above twenty years of age, died in the wilderness. "They could not enter in because of unbelief." Heb. 3. 19.

But Joshua and Caleb were of another spirit, and the Num. 32. 14. Lord engaged to bring them into the good land. To the whole congregation, who had manifested such ungracious unbelief, He also gave a promise, saying, "Your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised."

The people, not perceiving that they had forfeited the 14. 40-44.

blessing which they had been afraid to accept, then declared their willingness to go to the place which the Lord had promised. Without His presence, and contrary to His command, "they presumed to go up into the hill top."

Num. 14. 45. "Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah."

15. 34, 35. "While the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day."

15. 35, 36. "And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died."

15. 37-41. The Lord then commanded the children of Israel to put a specified ornament on their garments, and gave the following reason for the command,—"That ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye used to go a whoring; that ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God."

16. 1-14. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown, rebelled against the authority of Moses and Aaron. From the injunction to be holy to the Lord, they formed a pretext for equality of position in the service of God. They said, "Ye take too much upon

you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them : wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

Korah, of the separated family of Levi, was discontented with his appointed service of waiting upon God in the tabernacle, and of carrying the vessels of the sanctuary; he desired also to be a sacrificing priest. Dathan and Abiram, of the family of Reuben, the first-born of Jacob, and the princes, envied Moses. They accused him of not taking them into the good land, which their own unbelief had prevented them from entering, and charged him with elevating himself to his position of authority over them.

Num. 4. 4-15.
7. 9.
10. 21.

Since the Lord had appointed these his servants to their peculiar offices, He asserted His own authority and honour in avenging theirs. By an instantaneous judgment on the disaffected families, He would prove that He had sent Moses and Aaron. Moses said, "If the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord.....And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.....And they perished from among the congregation.....And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense."

16. 23-40.

Yet the children of Israel appear not to have seen the hand of the Lord in these judgments, for the next day they "murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord."

16. 41.

NUM. 16. 42-48.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment." His wrath was kindled, and He sent a plague into the camp, which destroyed fourteen thousand and seven hundred of the people.

16. 46-48, 50.

When the plague began, Moses directed Aaron to "go quickly into the congregation and make an atonement for them.....And Aaron took a censer, as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people; and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed."

20. 2-5.

Notwithstanding these manifestations of the Lord's presence among them, when they arrived at Kadesh and found no water, they again murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Would God we had died when our brethren died before the Lord.....Wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink."

20. 10-12.

Moses, who had hitherto shewn such wonderful forbearance and forgiveness, now became weary of their complaining. He was tempted to look at his own weakness, instead of looking at the power of God. "He spake unadvisedly with his lips." He, together with Aaron, said, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" The Lord regarded these words as sin against Himself. He said, "Ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel."

For this rebellion in Meribah, both Moses and Aaron Num. 20. 12, 23-25. lost the privilege of entering the promised land. Moses, who had been so highly-favoured, for the first time felt the weight of his Lord's displeasure. Though he earnestly entreated the Lord to let him go over and see the good land beyond Jordan, he was denied this one request for himself. In recounting this event to the Israelites he said, "But the Lord was wroth Deut. 3. 23-26. with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter." The Lord gave to Moses directions concerning the death of Aaron, saying, "Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto Mount Hor; and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there."

Though the Israelites had been fed and guided by the Lord for nearly forty years, they were still discouraged because of the difficulties of the journey. Again they spake against God and against Moses, saying, "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread." Num. 21. 4, 5.

"And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died." 21. 6.

The people confessed their sin; and though Moses had not been heard when he prayed for himself, he nevertheless prayed for the people. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it 21. 7, 8.

upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live."

1 Cor. 10. 9.

When the apostle Paul wrote, "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents," he assumes that it is possible for Christians to commit the same sin as that of the Israelites. They despised the manna and desired the food of Egypt. Shall we not take heed lest we desire the things of this world more than those of Christ,—lest the worldly accompaniments with which He is presented, or the persons by whom He is presented to us, are more regarded by us than Christ Himself? The Messiah was from the beginning the manifestation of the love of God to man. He was represented by the manna, and by the living stream of the desert, so now there is a lesson concerning Christ to be learnt from the serpent of molten brass. Jesus said to "a ruler of the Jews," "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." To believe God is life, to doubt God is death, might have been inscribed on the banners of Israel. And these words are as relatively true concerning man and the manifestation of God in Christ in the present dispensation. The words of the Messiah are, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

John 10. 10.

Num. 21. 10-13.

21. 21-35.

After many journeys and many sojourns, Israel encamped in the border of the Amorites. They asked permission to pass peaceably through their land, but instead of granting this request Sihon, king of the Amorites, gathered all his people together, and fought against Israel. "And Israel smote him with the edge

of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon." "And Og, the king of Bashan, went out against them, he, and all his people, to the battle at Edrei. And the Lord said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand..... So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land."

The destruction of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and of Og, king of Bashan, and of all their people, struck terror into the heart of Balak, king of Moab. In this emergency he sent ambassadors, with money as the reward of divination to Balaam a soothsayer; believing that he had the power to render him victorious over his enemies. This Balaam of the children of Ammon is supposed to have lived near the Euphrates, in Mesopotamia. He professed a high reverence for God, and spoke of him as "the Lord my God:" he would not consent to accompany the messengers until he had waited on the Lord. And, not knowing who were the Lord's people, and who were their enemies, he four times waited on the Lord, and desired Balak to wait while he sought permission to curse God's chosen people. Beside this reverential, though unenlightened waiting, he loudly proclaimed his obedience to God, that he must do all that the Lord said to him, and speak only that which the Lord put into his mouth. And when he sought the Lord, the Lord met him and spoke to him.

Num. 22. 1-4.

22. 5-7.

22. 8, 19.
23. 3, 15.

22. 18, 38.
23. 12, 26.
24. 13.

But for the sake of riches he went with the people of Chemosh; for the reward of earthly honour he accompanied Balak to Pisgah: he "loved the wages of unrighteousness," and, therefore, notwithstanding his

Num. 21. 29.
Jude 11.

2 Pet. 2. 15.

Titus 1. 16.

outward homage and partial obedience to God, he was a worshipper of Mammon, the prince of this world.

Matt. 6. 24.

This Gentile soothsayer, who wished to obey God, and yet receive honour from Balak, had his position of usefulness; he was a beacon-light to Jew and Gentile. The prophet Micah directed the Lord's people in his day to remember the consultations of Balak, and the answers of Balaam, that they might "know the righteousness of the Lord." And Balaam related his vision of the Almighty to a Gentile king; and through him surrounding nations might have learned some distinguishing characteristics of the people of Israel, that they "shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations;" that for number they should be compared to the particles of dust, and that the Lord was among them. And they would hear of the Messiah from the prophesy that, "there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth;" with other prophecies concerning Edom, Amalek, the Kenites, and Asshur or Assyria.

Num. 23. 9-24.

24. 14-25.

31. 16.
25. 1-3.

Defeated in his league with Balak to draw down a curse on Israel, Balaam laid subtle snares by which to entice them into sin. The men of Israel fell into the meshes prepared for them, they allied themselves with the people of Moab, they bowed down to their gods, and offered sacrifices to Chemosh.

25. 4-9.

The curse of the Lord was now seen in the camp of Israel. A plague was sent among them; the judges were commanded to slay every one his own men who

had been joined to Baal-peor; and the son of the High Priest slew Zimri the chief transgressor. So also was Num. 31. 1-8. Balaam slain by the sword of Israel, when the Lord was avenged on the kings of Midian. Balaam had before pronounced his own condemnation: for when speaking of God, the most High, the Almighty, he said, 24. 17. "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh."

The contrast between the prophets Balaam and Moses here forces itself upon our attention. The one, as we have seen, loved wealth and worldly honour. The other counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. The one could not then see God, and he had the foreboding consciousness that he would never approach near to God. With the other, the Lord spake "face to face, as a man speaketh unto Ex. 33. 11. his friend."

As from the beginning the sin of man has not only Num. 25. 10-13. aroused the anger of the Lord, but has presented occasions for the exhibition of His mercy; so now, because Phinehas was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel, the Lord gave him a covenant of peace, and ensured to his posterity an everlasting priesthood. And henceforth we find Phinehas serving the Lord as His priest, first in the wilderness, afterwards in the days of Joshua and the Judges: 31. 6. Josh. 24. 13. Ju. 20. 28. 1 Chro. 6. 10, 15. Ezra 5. 2. Zech. 6. 10, 11. his posterity were the High Priests of the Temple of Solomon until its destruction; and Joshua his illustrious descendant filled that exalted office in the rebuilt Temple of Zerubbabel.

After the last act of judgment on Israel, and the

bestowal of commendations on Phinehas, the children of Israel were again numbered; the question of the inheritance of daughters in default of sons was brought before the Lord by Moses; laws were promulgated concerning festal offerings and private vows; Israel was avenged on Midian; and the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and part of Manasseh were settled to the east of Jordan. Num. 26. 27. 1-11. 28-35. 33-35. Moses wrote a brief recapitulation of their resting places through the wilderness, with laws concerning their future settlement, and was admonished that the time had arrived for him to ascend Mount Abarim, that he might see the land which the Lord had given to the children of Israel and be gathered to his fathers. 27. 12, 13. 31. 2.

1 Cor. 2. 10-13. Does the Lord require that we look into His word to see what "the Holy Ghost teacheth" concerning the people of God in past times, and concerning His dealings with them, and with their enemies, that we may gather what will be His dealings with us? And shall we not continually find some new instruction in the details of this wilderness journey? May we not learn something of the character of the Lord our God, and of His ways toward man, by contemplating the season of mercy, before the giving of the law on Sinai, and the infliction of the judgments during the remaining years of their pilgrimage? Does not this evident difference afford a living illustration of the distinction

Luke 12. 47, 48. made in the parable between the two disobedient servants, one of whom knew his Lord's will, and was to be beaten with many stripes, while the other, who knew it not, was to be beaten with few stripes?

And while we remark the rarity of the instances of rebellion in Israel during the last eight and thirty years of the wanderings, we cannot forget that sin still dwelt among them, and towards the close of that

period manifested its power by holding under its sway an average of two thousand men in every tribe. We may also observe that, while the mixed multitude and Balaam the double-minded man tempted the people into degrading sins, the Princes, the High Priest, the Levites, and the Prophetess were assailed by the temptation of self-exaltation, and asserted their own supposed equality with God's appointed ruler; and even this eminent servant of the Lord, by one unadvised word, assumed to himself the work of God.

If in these details we see verified the words of the Psalmist, that in the sight of God the children of men "are all gone aside," that "there is none good, no, not one," we may be induced to look to the teaching of the Holy Spirit respecting sacrifice for sin. And we may rejoice in a better sacrifice than the death of animals, a better offering than thousands of bullocks and rams: for it is our high privilege to know that a perfect and all-prevailing sacrifice has been presented for us, and has been accepted by God, one which not only purifies from sin, but which gives life to the dead. PSA. 14. 3.

"WHAT will it be to contemplate,
In retrospect unclouded, all the means
By which His wisdom has prepared His saints
For the vast weight of glory which remains."

SWAINE.

Book III.

CHAPTER V.

THE FAREWELL OF MOSES.

The farewell addresses of Moses—The probability that all were delivered on one day—Recapitulation of the then recent history of the Israelites—Mounts Ebal and Gerizim—The predictions from the one now fulfilling, those from the other yet to be fulfilled—Israel to remember the words of Moses in the day of their dispersion—Prophetic benedictions—Congratulation to Israel on the love of God toward them—Moses ascends Mount Pisgah; he views the promised land, and dies—The past and the future re-appearance of Moses with Elijah—The blessings of Israel promised to New Testament saints.

THE term of Israel's wandering drew near its close. Ere long they would enter Canaan, the land of ancient promise. The earthly course of Moses, their leader, their law-giver, and advocate, was about to cease; he would soon partake of his heavenly inheritance. Before the man of God should enter his eternal home, and before the nation should possess their promised territory, while both were in the immediate prospect of a new and higher state of blessedness, there yet remained that the long-tried mediator should take a solemn farewell of his beloved people, and should enjoy a sight of the promised land. This farewell is recorded in the book of Deuteronomy, and appears to be divided into four or five distinct addresses delivered to the children of

Israel, either on one day, or during several days in the last month of his life. The first address mentions the day on which he commenced. "And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the Lord had given him in commandment unto them." In his fourth address he said, "I am an hundred and twenty years old this day." And when "Moses had made an end of speaking all these words," it is added, "And the Lord spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying, Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo..... and die in the mount whither thou goest up." The words "this day" had been used in a restricted sense about thirty times throughout the addresses, and nearly twenty times in four chapters; and to them was added the emphatic "selfsame day." From which we may conjecture that these energetic appeals to Israel were delivered on a most remarkable anniversary of the day on which Moses, as a new-born infant, entered this world under the doom of instant death, and that they were the immediate prelude to his most extraordinary decease. This would impart an adventitious halo of interest to these united addresses, which are separately replete with instruction; and which, as the inspired Word of God, and as the farewell of Moses to his cherished people, must ever command the deepest attention.

The children of Israel were gathered together in the land of Moab to hear these parting words. After recounting the recent events of their journey, and his own pleadings with God that he might be permitted to go over and see the good land, Moses denounced the judgments of God against them if they should corrupt

themselves and should make graven images. He solemnly assured them of the special favour of God towards them, and appointed the three places to be cities of refuge on the east of Jordan. He began his second discourse with a recapitulation of the ten commandments, and reminded them of the solemn transactions of Mount Sinai. He prophesied immediately of Joshua, and more distinctly, and yet more completely, of the Messiah, when he said, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken." He enjoined obedience from the motive of love, and was never weary of telling them of the greatness of God, and of His love toward them: and concluded this address with the curses which were to be pronounced from Mount Ebal, and the blessings which were to resound from Mount Gerizim. A solemn commentary on the curses of Mount Ebal is to be found in the history of the Jews for the last eighteen hundred years. A glorious elucidation of the blessings of Mount Gerizim is yet to be expected; for when Moses again called all Israel together, he anticipated the time when, scattered abroad, they should remember the words he had spoken to them, saying, "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God

Dent. 5.

18. 15-19.

27 & 28.

29. 2.

30. 1-5.

hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the utmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee: and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers."

Deut. 30. 18-20.

He concluded this short address with a solemn asseveration that he had set before them life and death, blessing and cursing; and again fervently enjoined love and obedience to the Lord their God. The love and presence of God as the animating motive for joyful obedience characterizes all his addresses. And when

31. 1-8.

Moses again exhorted Israel he said, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

31. 28, 29.

Foreseeing their future rebellions, he desired to speak more personally to the elders and officers; and then poured forth in the ears of all the congregation of Israel that beautiful song contained in the thirty-second chapter. And before his death he pronounced a prophetic benediction on eleven of the tribes, omitting that of Simeon, and distinguishing the tribe of Levi by appointing it to special service for the Lord.

33.

Ex. 14. 13.

With the same holy energy with which at the commencement of their journey he said to Israel, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord," he

Deut. 33. 29.

now concluded his exhortations to them with, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

His voice ceased : its last accents befitted a long life Dent. 34. 1-8. of God-fearing heroism. "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the Mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed : I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor : but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died : his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days."

The Lord said to Joshua, "Moses my servant is dead." Josh. 1. 2. These words assert a fact which no mortal eye had witnessed ; and they significantly inform the children of Israel that they were not to look for his return from Pisgah, as they should have done from Horeb.

Yet, in full harmony with the teaching of Scripture concerning resurrection-life, we read that Moses with John 11. 25. Elias appeared in glory on a mountain of Galilee, and there spake to Jesus "of His decease which He should Luke 9. 29-31. accomplish at Jerusalem." And the closing exhortation Mal. 4. 3-6. of the Old Testament which foretells the coming of Elijah, associates with his name that of Moses. Thus, the Lord of hosts said, "Remember ye the law of Moses

my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." How great will be the astonishment of the professed disciples of Moses, if he should come with Elijah, having "power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues,"—if he should then remind them of his earnest and reiterated exhortations to love and obey God,—if he himself should shew them that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,"—that He is the Angel who led them in the wilderness,—that He is the Messiah,—and that in rejecting Him they had committed the greatest sin! The writings of Moses testify of Jesus, and thus point to the one great sacrifice which can atone even for this sin: for the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse from all sin.

Rev. 11. 3, 6.

Rom. 10. 4.

John 5. 39, 45-47.

1 John 1. 7.

We have seen that the history of past ages is becoming increasingly interesting in the present time: and we have sought reverentially to retrace the acts of the Lord in judgment and mercy towards Egypt and Israel as nations; toward Reuben, Simeon, and Levi as tribes; toward Pharaoh and Moses, Balaam and Phinehas, as individuals. These past realities convey a solemn lesson to all; to those who, like Pharaoh, openly profess that they know not God; to those who, as Balaam, Korah, and Zimri, profess to serve the Lord, and yet allow avarice, pride, or aught else, to govern their hearts; and also to the true children of God,—to those who, like Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, are lovingly serving Him; for while the former endure the judgments of an angry

God, the latter receive the chastisements of a holy Father. But this record of warning is also a record of encouragement: it has told of a marvellous deliverance; of continued miraculous sustenance and guidance; of long-suffering watchful care; of transgressions passed over; and of atonement by sacrifice for sin.

In the Apocalypse, after the sealing of the twelve Rev. 7. thousand of each of the twelve tribes of Israel, we find that the blessings which the favoured people partially enjoyed in the wilderness are promised in their completeness to those who shall have come out of great tribulation, and shall have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. The benediction is, "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them; nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

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“ARE we the soldiers of the Cross,
The followers of the Lamb?
And shall we fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His name?

“Now must we fight if we would reign :
Increase our courage, Lord :
We'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word.

“Thy saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer, though they're slain;
They see the triumph from afar,
And shall with Jesus reign.”

WATTS.

“We see darkly: and from not distinguishing the things that differ, we often fail to harmonize the things that agree. But of all the lenses which collect and combine Truth's scattered rays, the best is a devout and adoring mind.”—*Excelsior*, 1854.

Book IV.

CHAPTER I.

JOSHUA.

New period in the history of Israel—Joshua and Caleb representatives of Joseph and Judah—The promise to Joshua the inheritance of all believers—Rahab—Crossing the Jordan—Circumcision—The Lord seen as a warrior—Conquest of Jericho—Achan—Ai taken—The Gibeonites—Distinctions in faith—The confederated kings—Division of the land—Joshua's farewell address to the people—Differences between the dispensation of Moses and that of Christ—Identity of the purposes of God throughout all time.

THE bondage of Egypt has long since passed away; the trials of the wilderness are ending; and Israel is taking possession of the land which for four hundred years had been promised to the seed of Abraham. But ere this promise is fulfilled the Jordan must be crossed, and the enemies of the Lord must be slain.

Six hundred thousand strong and healthy men left Num. 1. 46. Egypt; but of this host there survived two only, Joshua 26. 64, 65. and Caleb, the representatives of Joseph and Judah, who jointly received the birthright benedictions. Though the whole people had been under the yoke of slavery, we remember that Joshua was descended from the man who had ruled over his brethren, and who had governed the most renowned nation of the earth; and that in three months after the bonds of slavery had been broken,

he was entrusted with the selection and command of the men who fought with Amalek. He was now appointed by God and by His servant Moses to be the leader of Israel while crossing the Jordan, and in the conquest of Canaan, and to divide for them the promised inheritance.

Josh. 1. 5-9.

The Lord confirmed his appointment by these remarkable words: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee."

Heb. 13. 5.

The promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," is quoted by the apostle as applicable to all believing Jews; and throughout the world the children of God have received it as a message of love and of truth from their heavenly Father.

Deut. 31. 6, 7,

Josh. 1. 6, 7, 9.

1 Chron. 22. 13.

2 Chron. 32. 7.

Isa. 35. 4.

Dan. 10. 19.

Hag. 2. 4.

2 Tim. 2. 1.
1 Cor. 16. 13.
Eph. 6. 10.

Three times Moses commanded Joshua and Israel to be strong and of a good courage; three times the Lord repeated this exhortation to Joshua. Subsequently this injunction fell from the lips of the warlike David, of the holy Hezekiah, and of his friend the prophet Isaiah. The exhortation to be strong came with an angel's voice to Daniel; was heard by the high-priest Joshua from the mouth of the Lord himself; and was repeated to a Gentile minister of the gospel, and to Gentile churches by an Israelite apostle.

And while we see that the love of God to His people

is in every age the same, we also see that His acts of judgment and mercy in the past become illustrations of His judgments and mercies in the future.

When the two spies of Israel entered the land of Josh. 2. Canaan, the Lord manifested His willingness to pardon the Canaanites, and to adopt them into His family, if even then they had repented of their wickedness, and had believed in His mercy.

Rahab, a woman of Canaan, saw that a mighty power overshadowed Israel: she was therefore induced to cast in her lot with the Lord's people, to receive their spies, to make a covenant with them; and trusting to that covenant she rested in peace until the judgment descended on her doomed city, and then she received the reward of her faith.

Israel, on their departure from Egypt, had walked through the Red Sea, the waters being "a wall to them on their right hand and on their left." Under the 3. 4. command of the prophet whom the Lord had raised Deut. 18. 18. up like unto Moses, the rapid course of the Jordan was stayed. The priests bare the ark of the covenant, and when their feet were dipped in the brim of the water, "the waters which came down from above stood, and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan."

The people were anew consecrated by the rite of Josh. 5. 1-12.

circumcision. They also kept the Passover; and ate of the corn of Canaan. And He who had appeared to Abraham as a weary traveller, now approached His servant Joshua under the guise of a warrior. Here also the Lord so condescended to the conditions of humanity, that Joshua was not terrified by His appearance under this aspect. He calmly asked the stranger whether He was for him or for his adversaries. But when He declared himself the Captain of the Lord's host, His divinity was revealed; and Joshua, His own appointed general, "fell on his face to the earth and did worship." The impulse to worship was confirmed by the Lord's command, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy."

6. The Lord then communicated to Joshua the peculiar mode by which Jericho was to be taken. For six successive days the men of war were to walk once each day in silence round the city; on the seventh day they were to compass the city seven times, the priests were then to sound the rams' horns, and all the people were to shout with a great shout. They obeyed the word of the Lord, and on the seventh day, at the seventh time of compassing Jericho, "Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city." When the priests blew the trumpets and the people shouted, "the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city." And they burnt it with fire, and all that was therein; only the silver and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord."

Deut. 26. 1-11.
Eze. 20. 40, 41.

The covenant made with Rahab was then fulfilled. She and all her father's household were saved alive. And since one apostle cites her as a hero of faith, and

Heb. 11. 31.

another as an example of justification by works, we Ja. 1. 25.
may feel sure that she will be found in the casket of
the Lord in that day when He makes up His jewels. Mal. 3. 17.

The mercy of the Lord had overstepped the walls of Jericho, and had spared a woman of Canaan. His jealous holiness now penetrates the secrets of Israel's camp, and the covetousness of a son of Judah's royal tribe cannot pass unpunished.

The people had been exhorted to keep themselves Josh. 6. 18, 19.
from the accursed things, lest they make the camp of 7. 11, 20,
Israel a curse. Yet of those which were appointed to 21.
be burnt, Achan secreted a Babylonish garment, and of
those which were to be devoted to the service of the
sanctuary, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge
of gold of fifty shekels weight. Thus the law of God Ja. 2. 10.
was broken, and Israel accounted a transgressor and
a dissembler before Him.

For the sin of one man, the Lord's arm of victory Josh. 7. 12-26.
was withdrawn. Israel became defiled; and they were
driven back before a few men of Ai, and the hearts of
the people melted and became as water. The Lord
would not go forth with them, except the accursed
thing were destroyed from among them: therefore He
commanded Joshua to search out the transgressor, and
to burn him, and all that belonged to him with fire.
Thus, as Rahab received the blessings which apper-
tained to Israel, so Achan endured the curse which had
fallen on Jericho.

The tents of Israel being freed from the curse upon 8. 1-28.
the covetous, the Lord again said to Joshua, "Fear not,

neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land." And the Lord delivered the city of Ai into the hands of Joshua.

Josh. 9. 14, 15. One sin only is recorded against Joshua and Israel, in that they asked not counsel of the Lord concerning the Gibeonites.

Num. 33. 55.
Josh. 23. 13. The Lord had said concerning the inhabitants of the land, "It shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell."

Math. 9. 29.
Josh. 9. Having the faith of a child, Rahab had been received as a child into the family of Israel. Having a servile faith, and deceitfully representing themselves as people afar off, the Gibeonites were received as servants to the host of Israel. They appeared to know that far-off cities might be owned as tributaries, but they knew not the higher truth, that by believing and obeying the God of Israel, enemies might become friends.

Josh. 10. 1-5.
Jsa. 2. 19. The kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lacish, and Eglon, had a faith which is said to appertain to devils, for they believed and trembled, and confederated together to fight against Gibeon for having "made peace with Joshua and with Israel."

Josh. 10. But "the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and

smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. And it came to pass as they fled before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword." "The five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave," and stones were rolled upon the mouth of the cave until the work of slaughter was completed; the kings were then brought out, the captains of Israel trod upon their necks to testify their subjection, they were hanged on five trees, and afterwards were "cast into the same cave wherein they had been hid." Psa. 110. 1.

The Gibeonites, who professed themselves the servants of Israel, expected and received the privileges of vassals. In their distress they sent to Joshua, intreating him to come quickly and help them. Joshua and his army hastily travelled all night from Gilgal; and by the arm of the Lord the confederated enemies of Gibeon and of Israel were slain. To ensure the victory of Israel, Joshua spake unto the Lord, and commanded the sun to stand still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon. "So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel." By the light thus prolonged, Joshua seized or destroyed all the strongholds of Southern Canaan, and then returned with his conquering band to Gilgal. How great and how various were the rejoicings for the return of this victorious army! They had fought the battle of the Lord,—the battle of Israel; they had secured a home and country for themselves, their wives, Josh. 9. 8.
10.

Jer. 34. 39-41.
Acta 4. 34.
Psa. 97. 6.

and children; they had seen the Lord fulfilling His word to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to Moses and Joshua; they were of one heart with the Lord, and were of one heart among themselves; and, moreover, the heavens had declared the righteousness of the Lord; and all the people had seen His glory.

Josh. 11. 1-5. The kings of the northern districts of Canaan now associated themselves together to resist the invading force of Israel.

11. 6-23. And when this new danger appeared, the Lord encouraged the heart of Joshua by saying, "Be not afraid because of them: for to-morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel." "So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses: and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war."

13. The land east of Jordan had already been appor-
tioned to Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh.
14. Now Caleb claimed his promised mountain; and the
15. royal tribe of Judah received their inheritance; after
16 & 17. that Ephraim and Manasseh, the children of Joseph,
18 & 19. received theirs. When these tribes had obtained their
portion, the whole nation assembled together at Shiloh,
and set up the tabernacle of the congregation. There
was now no strife who should be the greatest; they all
waited the Lord's will concerning them: and at length
the seven remaining tribes received their inheritance.
20, 21, & 22. Six cities were appointed as refuges for the man-slayer,
and eight and forty for the dwellings of the Levites.
The two and a half tribes returned to their families

laden with riches, and bearing with them the blessing of Joshua.

Having reached his hundred and tenth year, the veteran soldier summoned two general assemblies of the elders, judges, officers, and tribes of Israel, to review the way in which the Lord had led them. As a prophet like unto Moses, he also exhorted the people to love the Lord their God, and to walk in His ways. But there exists a remarkable difference in one part of these addresses from those of his predecessor. Joshua adds, "Cleave unto the Lord, as ye have done this day." Moses had said, "Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear." During the command of Joshua, we read of no murmurings of the people, no jealousy of his supreme authority. Thus we see the moral character of Israel under a brighter aspect than during the wilderness journey. Josh. 23 & 24.
Deut. 29. 4.

Still Joshua knew the evil that dwells in the heart of man, and the proneness of the Israelites to idolatry; therefore he reminded them that the Lord is a jealous God, that they could not at the same time serve Him and the idols of the heathen. He called upon them that day to choose whom they would serve. "And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Israel."

A great blessing rested on this covenant, for Israel not only served the Lord all the days of Joshua, but all the days of the elders, who thus covenanted with the Lord on behalf of the people.

In reading the history of Joshua for instruction in

righteousness, the questions may suggest themselves, Do we as distinctly know who we serve, as the Israelites at this time knew who they served? Are we as willing as they were, to bind ourselves to the service of the Lord? These questions suit all times, all dispensations, and all administrations. Yet there are distinct dispensations. "And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." Agreeing with this is the saying, that "Unity in diversity, and diversity in unity, is a law of nature and of the Church." This diversity in unity is seen in the various members which compose our body. It is also seen in the variety of believers who unitedly form the body of Christ. And in its progress toward maturity, the body, maintaining its identity, requires changes of nutriment and discipline. So in the Church of God progressive dispensations are marked by different administrations.

Therefore, if we desire to serve the Lord as faithfully as did the Israelites under Joshua, our faithfulness will be exhibited under different circumstances. And in order that, as far as the Lord may enable us, we may live, act, and worship, according to our present New Covenant privileges, let us observe some distinguishing features of the past Mosaic, and of the present Christian dispensations.

In the time of Moses, the Lord saw it good to permit retaliation, which He has since distinctly forbidden. In that early age, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," was a law for the people of God; now it is, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." It was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy;" it is now, "Love your

1 Cor. 12. 4-5.

Ex. 21. 24.

Matt. 5. 38-48.

Lev. 19. 18.

Deut. 23. 6.

Psa. 139. 21, 22.

enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you."

Again, Moses sang, "The Lord is a man of war." Ex. 15. 3.
And to Joshua, Jehovah appeared as a warrior. Yet, in the prophetic anticipation of the New Covenant, the same Lord is called, "the Prince of peace." His birth, Isa. 9. 6. when He took our nature, was announced as bringing Luke 2. 14. peace on earth, and to His disciples, He gave this parting benediction, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give John 14. 27. unto you." And when He had risen from the dead, "Peace be unto you," was the salutation of this Prince 20. 21. of peace.

The commission to Joshua to extirpate the Canaanites, and to plant the nationality of Israel was completely executed by him; and was in its nature wholly distinct from that given to the disciples, to go into all Mark 16. 15. the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Further, the covenant of works by Moses was superseded by the covenant of grace by Jesus Christ: the sacrifice of animals ceased when the Son of God had offered himself in sacrifice. Atonement through the inferior creation "would be utterly condemned," if put in competition with redemption effected by the most exalted nature that could endure for others. And now, no blood flows in remembrance of the sacrifice which has been offered and accepted. After this great change, other changes follow. There is an evident diversity between the precise ritual given by Moses, and the absence of ritual in the instructions of Christ. In the older covenant, when blood daily flowed to expiate the sin of man, the mode and time of offering the sacrifices were definitely prescribed. One tribe was appointed to fulfil all the services of the sanctuary; one family, to make atonement for the people; one person in that

family, once in every year, was to enter into the immediate presence of Jehovah; and one place was alone assigned for that approach to the Most High. But when the offering of Christ was accepted, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain, and after a few years the Holy of holies was consumed with fire. Instead of one consecrated temple at Jerusalem, the whole world has become the arena of worship. Where two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus, there He is,—that place is holy.

Circumcision was the sign of a covenant between God and the children of Abraham; and God himself said,
 Gen. 17. 14. "The uncircumcised man-child.....shall be cut off from
 Heb. 8. 7-13. his people; he hath broken my covenant." But a new covenant renders the first old: and in the New Testament an inspired servant of God boldly writes, "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Instead of the rite which had attested birth into the family of Abraham, and separation from all other families of the earth, the rite of baptism was commanded to be the medium of professing the new birth into the family of Jesus Christ through belief in Him, and consequent separation from the principles which govern the world.

Instead of costly vicarious sacrifice, the Lord appointed a simple meal as a remembrance of the sacrifice which He had already offered; and left the example of the first disciples as the only direction for the time and mode of its celebration; with a reproof to a Gentile Church to guard against irreverent feasting.

Jesus having commanded His disciples to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of His death,—to proclaim salvation through belief in that death,—and to baptise those who by faith participate in that sacrifice,—

Matt. 18. 20.

Gen. 17. 14.

Heb. 8. 7-13.

Gal. 5. 2-4.

Col. 2. 11, 12.
 Matt. 28. 19.
 Luke 7. 30.
 Acts 2. 41.
 Rom. 6. 3-11.
 1 John 5. 1.

Matt. 26. 26-30.
 Luke 22. 19, 20.

24. 1. 35.
 Acts 20. 7.
 1 Cor. 11. 17-34.

He ascended to heaven, and now stands as the Great High Priest within the veil, as the Representative of His people; as their Advocate presenting their petitions; and by the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, sending answers of peace and love. And by virtue of His one perfect sacrifice, every one, whether he be an unknown orphan of an outcast race, or the heir of ancient dignities,—whether he be accounted vile or outwardly pure,—may alike draw nigh to Him, and claim His intercession with the Father; and that not only once a year, but every day and at every hour; for there is now no limitation of time, or place, or person. There is but one restriction in our approach to the incomprehensible Jehovah,—that is, that we draw nigh in the name, by the sacrifice, and through the merits of the Lord Jesus.

Heb. 9. 7-28.

7. 25-28.

Here are great and manifold differences, severally proclaiming some truth of God, which therefore it must be a privilege to understand clearly. In the order of these diversities there is marked progression, and we evidently retrograde if we place ourselves under the law of Moses, instead of under that of Christ. The former may be more congenial to our imperfect nature; but if Christ has come in the flesh, it cannot be a question to be decided by human preference, whether or not we are under His authority. The Son of God was, when on earth, the most sympathising of men; and now, by virtue of His own death, He is willing to receive the children of men into fellowship with himself: therefore to impede access to Him by the intervention of our fellow-creatures, or by any human device, is in its measure to reject His love. The Sun of righteousness has risen,—let us rejoice in His healing beams: the Holy Spirit has descended,—let us manifest His presence, and

Mal. 4. 2.

John 14. 26, 26.
Acts 2. 4. 33.

anticipate the day when God shall be perfectly glorified by redeemed man.

Having noticed some distinctions between the past dispensation and the present, we venture not upon those of the future, but proceed to consider the essential unity of the purposes of God as we find them revealed in His Word. We there learn, that before the foundation of the world the Lord Jesus was fore-ordained to shed His precious blood for the redemption of His people. We also learn that from the same era the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus were chosen in Him, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love; and that from this same epoch, a kingdom has been prepared for those who shew their love to Him by assiduous care for those who constitute His body.

1 Pet. 1. 20.
Eph. 1. 4.
Matt. 25. 34-40.

To institute sacrifice for sin, and by sacrifice to enable men to draw near unto himself, and to render them holy in heart and life, was the purpose of God before the foundation of the world. The institution of sacrifice has been evident from the offering of the first lamb outside the gates of Eden, during the patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian dispensations. Access to the Most High has been enjoyed by Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and disciples; and obedience to the word of the Lord, holiness of heart and life, have been exhibited by His servants throughout all dispensations. The end of sacrifice,—the perfect fellowship of the saints with the Saviour, and their entire conformity to His image,—will be fully accomplished when He who has been known as the Lamb which was slain, shall come forth “conquering and to conquer,” as the High Priest bearing the Hebrew name Joshua, the Greek name Jesus. As the Saviour and King, He will then give to His people that rest, which the argument of the apostle proves

Rev. 6. 2.
Zech. 6. 11-13.
Heb. 4.

that they did not receive from the Joshua who led them into the earthly Canaan. And having completed the work of atonement, as the "Priest upon His throne" He will have established peace for ever between God and man.

Then shall we see how all antecedent living portraiture are combined in the one perfect Emmanuel; how the progressive dispensations in the Church of God were preliminary to that full revelation of himself and His kingdom, which the beloved disciple was permitted to see in vision.

Among the many introductory revelations concerning the Lord and His people, we remember that Abraham saw the day of Christ; that Isaiah saw the new dispensation—the Redeemer and Creator as one—the suffering Messiah and the Gentile Church; the various and abundant blessings which are yet reserved for Israel; and the resurrection of the dead in Christ: and, that John the favoured disciple speaks of the numbering of the saints; the binding of Satan; the desolation of the harlot; the wife made ready; the city prepared for her; the new Jerusalem,—the city in which there is no temple; "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it," and in which the light of the sun needs no prolonging; for "the glory of the Lord is the light thereof." Thus, the Patriarch, the prophet and the apostle, men severally belonging to the three dispensations, stretch their eager gaze onward to the day of the Lord, that day for which we are now so especially commanded to watch and to wait.

As a disciple of the Baptist, John hailed the coming of the Messiah; he survived the abolition of the "worldly sanctuary" and the "carnal ordinances" of Moses: and it is from his writings that we may most definitely learn

Isa. 43. 14, 15.
54. 5.

55.
60. 9-5.

Isa. 2. 1-3.
66. 20.
60-62.
26. 19.

Rev. 7. 4-9.
20. 1-3.
17 & 18.
19.
21.

Matt. 24. 42.

25. 13.

Mark 13. 33-37.

Luke 21. 34-36.

1 Thess. 5. 4, 6.

Heb. 9. 1, 10.

John 1. 1.
1 John 1. 1.
Rev. 22. 1-5.

the true character of the present dispensation, and the glories of the future. He teaches alike "that which was from the beginning," and that which will endure without end: alike the most terrible judgments, and the unparalleled mercy of the Lord; the justice and vengeance which characterizes the age of Moses and Joshua; the free forgiving love and tenderness which Jesus manifested.

In retracing the life of Joshua, we have seen the certainty of the Lord's judgments, as well as the certainty of His love. We have seen the unremitted blessings granted to a believing and obedient people, the services bestowed on those who united themselves with them, and the judgments poured out on their enemies. In the gospel dispensation we see mercy promised to all who believe in Jesus, and judgment threatened to all who reject Him. Shall we then fatally delude ourselves by supposing that God will never again appear in judgment, to allure our souls from the contemplation of His past judgments and mercies, and of His own revelation concerning the future? If we have imbibed the spirit of John, we shall find that the knowledge of future judgments will not drive us from the love of God; for to that beloved disciple, to the evangelical Isaiah, and to the beloved Daniel, the fact that they will be poured out on the earth was especially communicated. And, as we have seen in the history of Joshua, the judgments are not for the children, but for the enemies of the Lord; so we may feel assured that if the God of Joshua be our God, we shall rejoice in the oneness of His purposes throughout the diversity of His dispensations: and whether He manifest himself in solemn majesty or in lowliness and love, we shall

have fellowship with Him, we shall be partakers of the ^{1 John 1. 3.}
Divine nature, and we shall rejoice with joy unspeak- ^{2 Pet. 1. 4.}
able and full of glory. ^{1 Pet. 1. 8.}

"Lo! He comes, with clouds descending,
Once for favoured sinners slain:
Thousand thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train:
Hallelujah!
Jesus comes, and comes to reign.

"Every eye shall then behold Him,
Robed in dreadful majesty:
Those who set at nought and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing,
Shall the true Messiah see.

"When the solemn trump has sounded,
Heaven and earth shall flee away;
All who hate Him must, confounded,
Hear the summons of that day:
Come to judgment!
Come to judgment! come away!

"Yea, Amen! let all adore Thee,
High on Thine eternal throne:
Saviour, take the power and glory;
Make Thy righteous sentence known:
O come quickly,
Claim the kingdom for Thine own."

OLIVER.

Book V.

CHAPTER I.

THE JUDGES.

IN fabulous story, the imagination of man runs wild when describing the intercourse between its immortal gods and mortal men. But amid this exuberant imagination there is a germ of truth. From the beginning, Jehovah, the true, the everlasting God, has held intercourse, even personal intercourse, with His creature, man: and we have already seen that He has graciously adapted himself to the circumstances of the person visited. And now that the pilgrimage is over, and the battle for the land is won,—now that in times of trouble Judges are raised up as deliverers,—the Angel of the Lord again visits His people. He first addressed the entire nation with words of reproof and warning; He afterwards appeared to a young man, whom He appointed as a delivering judge; and again to the wife of an honourable man, and promised her a son.

In the office of an Israelitish judge we may see one of the earthly "patterns of things in the heavens," for the judge of those days, unlike a modern judge, included in his office the entire administration of civil and military affairs. He inflicted the judgments of the Lord

Heb. 9. 23.

on the enemies of Israel, His chastisements on evil doers among themselves.

The temporary judge held his delegated authority from the Eternal Judge: and the presence of that Supreme Judge was distinctly shewn by His awarding prosperity or adversity to Israel. In no period of the Jewish history is the oft-repeated connection of sin with judgment, and of contrition with mercy, more distinctly seen than in that of the Judges. The cause of subjection to their enemies, and of deliverance from them, is each time as distinctly stated as is the fact itself. When Israel bowed down to idols, the Lord made them servants to idol-worshippers; when they resumed their fealty to the King of kings, they lived for many years in peace and prosperity.

The penalties and the rewards were transitory, but they were visible and certain; and by them the truth and faithfulness, the living presence of the Most High, were distinctly made known to the children of men. In the present time, nations receive the blessing of temporal prosperity when they act according to the will of God, while individuals who are assured of eternal life, are often precluded from such earthly rewards, which nevertheless will be abundantly outweighed by the glories of heaven.

Ju. I. 1-3.

After the death of Joshua, Caleb was the sole survivor of the men who left Egypt, yet he was not made commander of the children of Israel until they had asked the Lord who should first go up against the Canaanites. "The Lord said, Judah shall go up."

I. 4.

"And Judah went up; and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men."

Adoni-bezek their king was captured; and, according to the severe treatment of prisoners in those days, the children of Judah cut off his thumbs and his great toes. His own confession is, "As I have done, so God hath requited me." Ju. 1. 6, 7.
Pa. 18. 26.

The tribe of Judah took Jerusalem and set it on fire: they gave Hebron to Caleb, who expelled thence the three sons of Anak: and Othniel took Debir or Kirjath-sepher, the book-city, or city of archives. "And the Lord was with Judah." And the house of Joseph prevailed over the Amorites. Ju. 1. 8-13.
20-22. 35.

The Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal, the place where Israel had deposited the memorial stones after crossing the Jordan,—where they had observed the rite of circumcision, and had celebrated the Paschal feast. He reminded them of the fulfilment of His promises, of His own commands to their forefathers, of their disobedience to those commands, and of His consequent judgments. 2. 1-5.
Josh. 4. 20.
5. 1-10.

Nevertheless, after the death of all Joshua's contemporaries, the children of Israel intermarried with idolators; they forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Ju. 2. 10-13.
3-5-7.

"Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hands of Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years." He who was now sent to them as a scourge for worshipping Baal was the king of the chief seat of Baal-worshippers. If Abraham had not obeyed the command of the Lord, 2. 14, 15.
3. 8.

his posterity might have been the hereditary subjects of this king; now, for their own disobedience, they serve him for a season as conquered tributaries.

Ju. 3. 9-11. When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, He raised up Othniel, the son-in-law and nephew of Caleb, to deliver them from this Assyrian adversary. By the Spirit of the Lord he judged Israel. "And the land had rest forty years."

3. 12. After the death of Othniel, the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord.

3. 12-14. "And the Lord strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel." "And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm-trees. So the children of Israel served Moab eighteen years."

3. 15-31. But when they cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer. From among the hosts of Israel, He now chose Ehud, a left-handed man. He slew Eglon king of Moab, and led Israel to freedom under the banner of the Lord, saying, "Follow after me: for the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand." After the slaughter of ten thousand valiant men of Moab, "the land had rest fourscore years."

Then Shamgar delivered Israel from the Philistines by slaying six hundred men with an ox goad.

4. 1. "And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord."

4. 2, 3. "And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin

king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor." "He gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand." "For twenty years Jabin mightily oppressed the children of Israel." Ps. 106. 40-48.

"And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." 106. 44-46.
And "He regarded their affliction when He heard their cry. And He remembered for them His covenant, and repented according to the multitude of His mercies." Jn. 4. 3-23.
5.
He then raised up two women to free them from the oppression of their enemies. Deborah, who dwelt between Ramah and Bethel, near the grave of her namesake, the servant of Rachel, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, "judged Israel at that time." Gen. 35. 8. "The children of Israel came up to her for judgment." And when the Lord had heard their cry for mercy, He gave Deborah wisdom to direct their army. She feared not the Canaanitish chariots of iron, for she remembered the name of the Lord: and through her faith the feeble-spirited Barak was inspired with courage. Ps. 20. 7. When from Mount Tabor she saw that Sisera had gathered together his nine hundred chariots of war in the valley of Megiddo, she said to Barak and his ten thousand men of Zebulon and Naphtali, "Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee?" And the Lord fought against Sisera, and discomfited all his host with the edge of the sword before Barak. Then Sisera, Jabin's captain, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber; "for there was peace between Jabin, king of Hazor, and the house of Heber the Kenite." And Jael, seeing that she must either

side with the people of the Lord or with their enemies, preferred serving Israel to following hereditary, and ordinarily the most sacred, maxims of hospitality toward Sisera. When he slept, she drove a tent nail through his temples, and he died. "And the land had rest forty years."

Ju. 6. 1. "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord."

6. 1-6. "And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years." The oppression of the Midianites appears to have been greater than that of all their other enemies. They devoured the increase of the earth, and left no sustenance for Israel. "And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites."

6. 7-40. Then the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, and He sent a prophet to remind them that they had not obeyed His voice. And "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," chose from among the hosts of Israel one who thought himself the least in his father's house, and that house poor in Manasseh. But the God of heaven and earth despiseth not the poor. As an angel, He came to revive the humble, to strengthen him who felt he had no might. In Ophrah, where Gideon was stealthily threshing his wheat near a wine-press, the angel of the Lord came and sat under an oak, and said to him, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." Gideon had thought that Jehovah had forsaken them; and it was not until the Lord had said, "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites:" and had further said, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou

Jas. 2. 5, 6.

Isa. 57. 15.

Isa. 40. 29.

- shalt smite the Midianites as one man," that all his doubts were removed. The Angel who thus spoke to him, consented to tarry until the present of a kid was brought. Then, having directed its preparation for a burnt offering, and having accepted the sacrifice by bringing fire from the rock to consume it, He "departed out of his sight."

Ere Israel could be sent on the errand of victory, the honour of Jehovah must be vindicated. On the same night the Lord commanded Gideon to break down his father's heathen altar, and to sacrifice his father's bullock on the wood of the grove, which he was also to cut down. Happily for Gideon, and happily for Israel, he had ten servants who, with him, were willing to serve the Lord. The life of Gideon was thereby endangered: but he had honoured the Lord by this act of obedience, and thus was preparing for the further service which was appointed him.

Then the Midianites and Amalekites pitched in the valley of Jezreel. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he gathered together men from Manasseh, Asher, Zebulon, and Naphtali. That he might be assured of success against his enemies, Gideon asked the Lord for a double miracle. His request was granted. But, lest Israel should say, Mine own hand Ja. 7. hath saved me, of the thirty-two thousand men who were gathered together, only three hundred were allowed to fight the battles of the Lord. By these three hundred Israel would be saved. And the same night the Lord said to Gideon, "Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand." But, lest the heart of Gideon should be unprepared for so great an enterprise, He directed him to take a servant with him, and to go down to the enemy's camp, and

he should hear what would there be said of him. According to the word of the Lord, he heard a Midianite telling his companion, that God had delivered all their host into the hand of Gideon. And with broken pitchers, lamps, and the sound of the trumpet in the dead of night, the Midianites were discomfited. "All the host ran, and cried, and fled... and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow." Then the men of Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh gathered themselves together, and pursued after their enemies. And Gideon sent messengers to the men of Ephraim, inviting them to come to their help. The Midianites were entirely defeated: and the land had rest forty years.

Ju. 8. 1-3.

Internal dissension, which might have arisen from the jealousy of the haughty Ephraimites, was happily suppressed by the following graceful and courteous reply of Gideon: "Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb, and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you?"

5. 23.

8. 4-17.

The curse pronounced by Deborah on those who came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty, was now executed on the men of Succoth, who refused bread to the three hundred valiant men of Gideon, when they were weary while pursuing the Midianites.

8. 33-35.

"Gideon, the son of Joash, died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites."

As soon as Gideon was dead, the children of Israel

turned again after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god. They "remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side; neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel." And the one son of Gideon's concubine destroyed sixty-nine of his sons by his married wives. Jn. 8. 31.
9. 1-5.

"When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel, then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech: that the cruelty done to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren." Abimelech, and the men with him, burnt about a thousand men and women in the tower of Shechem; and he was killed when a millstone had been cast upon his head by a woman. 9. 22-51.

After the death of Abimelech, Israel enjoyed peace for forty-five years, under Tola, a man of Issachar, and under Jair, a Gileadite. 10. 1-5.

The children of Israel again did evil in serving all the gods of the neighbouring heathen countries; and in forsaking the Lord. 10. 6.

"And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon." And for eighteen years they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel to the east of Jordan. And the Ammonites 10. 7-14.

crossed the Jordan to fight against Judah, Benjamin, and the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was sore distressed.

"And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." He now for the first time refused to grant their request, saying, "I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation."

Ju. 10. 15, 16.

The children of Israel again confessed their sin; "they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord: and His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." And "He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity."

Ps. 78. 38.

Ju. 11.

The elders of Gilead then sought Jephthah, who, being despised, had been expelled from his father's house, and they requested him to become their Captain. On condition of being the future head over all the inhabitants of Gilead, Jephthah consented to lead them out to battle. He then sent messengers to the king of the children of Ammon, and closed his address to him with an appeal to the Lord as the Judge between Israel and Ammon. But "the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words that Jephthah sent unto him." Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah: and He "passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord delivered them into his hands."

12. 1-4.

Unsoothed by the forbearance of Gideon, the pride of the men of Ephraim was again aroused. They refused to aid Jephthah in the beginning of the strife with the children of Ammon; and when he returned triumphant, they accused him of not having invited them to share

in the victory; and they went out to fight against Jephthah.

In consequence of this second outburst of pride, Ja. 12. 5, 6.
Ephraim lost forty-two thousand men.

Jephthah judged Israel six years; and was succeeded 12. 7-15.
by a man of Bethlehem; afterward by one of Zebulun;
and then by one of Ephraim: and the land had rest for
a period of thirty-one consecutive years.

Then "the children of Israel did evil again in the 13. 1.
sight of the Lord."

"And the Lord delivered them into the hands of the
Philistines forty years."

Exclusive of this forty years' rule of the Philistines, we have, from the death of Joshua, distinct dates which amount to three hundred and fifty years. During two hundred and seventy-nine of these years, the children of Israel enjoyed their land and their homes in peace and prosperity. We may therefore conclude that for the greater part of these years they walked in obedience to the law of Moses. For the remaining seventy-one years, they were greatly afflicted by their enemies, or were under their dominion.

"NOTHING of all these evils hath befallen me
But justly; I myself have brought them on,
Sole author I, sole cause; if aught seem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned
The mystery of God, given me under pledge
Of vow, and have betrayed it to a woman,
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy."

MILTON.

Book V.

CHAPTER II.

SAMSON, ELIMELECH, AND RUTH.

The birth of Samson—His bodily strength—His moral weakness—His trust in the Lord—Elimelech, Naomi, Ruth—Contrast between Gideon and Elimelech—The name of the Lord honoured by the seed of Israel, and by strangers.

THE history of Samson, the next judge, is more minutely Ja. 13. related than that of any other. Seven hundred years had passed away since the Angel of the Lord had appeared to Abraham and Sarah to announce the birth of a son. During that seven hundred years, the seed of the promised son had spread over the land of Canaan: and millions, with deepest veneration, called him father, who, when entertaining angel-guests on the plains of Mamre, knew that sacred name only from the lips of the son of a bond woman.

Manoah was highly esteemed in the small tribe of Dan, yet a visit from an angel exceeded all honour which could come from man. He believed that the angel who promised him a son was Jehovah, and he desired to receive instructions concerning the training of the expected child.

In answer to the prayer of Manoah, the Angel of the Lord condescended to appear a second time to his wife.

He graciously waited the arrival of Manoah, and then remained while the kid and cake were prepared; and "when the flame (of the sacrifice) went up toward heaven from off the altar, the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar."

The course prescribed by the angel was strictly followed. The child grew; and the peculiar blessing on this heaven-predicted treasure appeared in the gift of bodily strength. He was as "a lion's whelp." In the neighbourhood of ungodly giants he had received from the Lord a giant's strength.

Ju. 14. 1-3. When Samson grew to man's estate, his heart desired the daughter of an idolator for a wife. His parents remonstrated. They did not, as Abraham, command their household, but yielded to the entreaties of their son.

Ju. 14. 15. 9-13. Though the Lord permitted the alliance, probably from the faint-heartedness of the men of Judah, who were then unequal to achieve the victories of faith; the consequences of this sin fell, not only on Samson, who was deceived and betrayed by his wife, but on all Israel, who, through it, lost the benefit of his strength in their conflicts with their enemies.

Ju. 16. 1-4. Unwarned by past experience, Samson united himself with another Philistine woman.

14. 15-20.
15. 1-8.
16. His first transgression had brought in its train successive treacheries toward himself, which he revenged by a great slaughter of the Philistines. This second sin brought on him a series of calamities. His wife Delilah beguiled him of the secret wherein his great

strength lay, and betrayed him to his enemies; he was then set to the drudgery of grinding corn, and, greatest indignity of all, he, the Nazarite, was condemned to make sport for the Philistines when they were assembled for the purpose of sacrificing to Dagon, their god.

The Philistines, fearing lest the Hebrews should prepare weapons of war, had prohibited their following the occupation of a smith throughout all the land of Israel. But "He that giveth strength and power unto His people," could enable them to destroy their enemies without the use of sword or spear. With such ignoble arms as an ox-goad and the jawbone of an ass, at one time six hundred, and at another a thousand Philistines were slain. Ju. 5. 8.
1 Sa. 13. 19-22.
Pa. 68. 35.

And now that the Lord's servant had become the sport of their uncircumcised enemies, now that he was in affliction and cried unto the Lord, the Lord renewed his strength; and by the power which he afresh imparted, Samson drew down upon the Philistines the roof of the house in which they were making merry, when three thousand men and women, including all the lords of the Philistines, were buried beneath its ruins.

Notwithstanding the disobedience of Samson, the Lord granted his requests when he called upon Him. In answer to his petition, when almost dying from thirst, the Lord miraculously supplied him with water. And it was when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, that he performed his feats of strength. He judged Israel twenty years; and the apostle Paul reckons him among those who, through faith, wrought righteousness, and obtained promises. Ju. 15. 17-19.
13. 25.
14. 6, 19.
15. 20.
Heb. 11. 32.

Ruth 1. 1.

We afterwards read of an Israelite whose want of faith in God induced him to leave the land of Israel in a time of famine.

1. 3.

Death, which Elimelech had fled from Bethlehem to avoid, he met in Moab.

1. 6-19.

But a blessing rested on his God-fearing wife. Naomi had won the heart of her daughter-in-law Ruth for the Lord; and, though surrounded by heathenism, she claved to the God of Israel, and accompanied Naomi in her return to Bethlehem. There, in taking up the humble

2.

occupation of a gleaner, the Lord blessed her. Boaz, the owner of the field in which she gleaned, was a near

4. 1-10.

relative of her late husband; and, in accordance with the law of Moses, he united himself with her in marriage. She had before been received into the family of Abraham, both by natural and spiritual relationship:

4. 18-22.

and through this second Israelite alliance, she became one of the ancestors of the Messiah.

Bp. Patrick.
Preb. Towns-
end.

Some commentators suppose that the famine during which Gideon was raised up to serve his country, was the same as that which induced the expatriation of Elimelech, and which eventually brought Ruth into covenant relationship to God.

Matt. 16. 25.

This would bring Elimelech and Gideon into an immediate contrast, illustrative of the words of our Lord,—“Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” And it would strikingly manifest the purposes of God in overruling the affairs of this life, by thus rendering the invasion of the Midianites the means of shewing His watchful love over the Israelites

when they cried to Him for deliverance,—over the humble and laborious Gideon,—and over the faithful and confiding Ruth.

The words of the Moabitess to her Israelite mother, “Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God,” remind us that the mass of the people who have now joined themselves to the Lord, “to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord,” are descended from those who were strangers to the seed of Israel: and the return of Naomi to the land of her fathers, accompanied by this daughter-in-law from the land of Moab, brings to our recollection prophecies which we may shortly see fulfilled; when of the seed of Jacob “one shall say, I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel;” and when the stranger shall be joined with them in their own land. Then, by their faith in the God of Israel—by their anew cherishing their hereditary names—by their return to their own land, accompanied by those who with them honour the God of their fathers,—Jehovah will be glorified both by Jew and Gentile.

Is. 56. 6, 7.

44. 1-5.

14*1.

“For God,
Nothing more certain, will not long defer
To vindicate the glory of His name
Against all competition, nor will long
Endure it doubtful whether God be Lord,
Or Dagon.”

MILTON.

Book V.

CHAPTER III.

ELI AND HIS SONS.

Sin in the priests of the Lord—Two messengers to Eli—The ark of the Lord on the field of battle; in the house of Dagon; in the country of the Philistines—The death of Eli—The parental character of God.

AFTER seeing the care of our heavenly Father over the believing Moabitess,—after a walk in the cornfields of Bethlehem,—we are taken to the tabernacle in Shiloh, into the presence of the Lord. In this tabernacle of the covenant, among those who came to offer their thanksgivings for mercies received, there was one who came to present her petition for a blessing desired; among those who came to offer the appointed sacrifice for sin, there were some, called the priests of the Lord, who were clothed in the vestments of the sanctuary, but who were doing the works of their father the Devil.

At this time iniquity so abounded, that the high-priest more readily supposed a woman to be drunken than to be praying. The sons of that high-priest, while ministering before the Lord, gave themselves up to covetousness. They ate the sacrifices which were to be burnt before the Lord, or which should be shared with the offerer. “And the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord.”

1 Sam. i. 9-16.

2. 12-17.

Sam. 3. 13. And Eli knew the iniquity of his sons, "and he restrained them not."

Num. 1. 2, 3. The Lord is a jealous God, and He cannot permit His
Margin. high-priest to shew more regard to his own sons than to
1 Sam. 2. 27-36. the laws of his God. Though "the Lord is slow to
3. 11-14. anger," He is "great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked;" and, to reprove His venerable high-priest, He sent two messengers,—a man of God and a little child, Eli's own foster-child. Solemn and sad were the words of desolation which they brought him,—even that he should see the tabernacle of God in affliction,—that his two sons should die in one day,—and that, when the Lord began His judgments, He would make a full end of the house of Eli; "that it should not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever."

Margin. **2. 32.**

1 Sam. 4. From the tabernacle of God we pass on to the battle-field. From the prediction there is but one step to the fulfilment. The Israelites are smitten before their enemies, and four thousand of their sons are slain. They ask, "Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philistines?" and vainly hope the ark of the covenant, as the appointed symbol of His presence, may save them from the sword of their enemies.

There had been a mysterious power in that symbol,—a mighty influence in that ark overlaid with gold. In the wilderness, when the ark set forward, Moses said,
Num. 10. 35, 36. "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee." When the
Joel. 4. 7. Israelites entered Canaan, "the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant." Will not the Philistines now fly before it? They know the power that the God of Israel had exercised in Egypt; and,

according to their idolatrous notions, they suppose the golden ark to be that God. But instead of fleeing before it, they fight more desperately.

And the slaughter among the hosts of Israel was seven-fold what it had been before. Yet more, the ark of God was taken captive, and its priests were slain. The Philistines took the ark of the covenant ^{1 Sam. 5.} from the field of battle, and put it in the house of Dagon, an idol in the form of a man, cloaked in the skin of a fish,—it is supposed from some traditional reference to Noah. This Dagon fell on his face before the ark of the Lord. He was set up in his place: again he fell; and his head and hands were broken off. Instead of bringing blessings, the symbol of the divine ^{2 Cor. 2. 16.} presence scattered evils all around. At Ashdod, at Gath, and at Ekron, whither it was successively carried, the men died, or were smitten with emerods. Neither could it remain in the open country, for there the mice destroyed the corn. And when the men of Bethshemesh ^{Nu. 4. 5, 15, 20.} disobeyed the command of the Lord, and looked into the ark, “the Lord smote many of the people with a great slaughter.” He thus manifested His presence by judgments on His enemies, and on the disobedient among His own people.

Overwhelmed with the unheard-of tale, that the ark ^{1 Sam. 4. 14-18.} of the Lord was in the hands of the Philistines, the aged Eli fell off from his seat, “and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.” His sons Hophni and Phinehas were slain; and for a season the glory departed from Israel.

The one failure in the character of Eli, exhibited in

his relation as a father, reminds us that that relationship has a twofold aspect of completeness, including both parental tenderness and parental discipline. The character of God as a father is made known to us in this twofold aspect. The man after God's own heart writes, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." The wise son of that good king shews the divine paternal love in correcting discipline, as, "Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." In Eli, the parental compassion outweighed his reverence for the law of God, and a due regard to the welfare of his sons; and this infirmity of the high-priest brought upon him the corrections of his God and Father. The justice of this chastisement Eli acknowledged in his short reply, "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good." The most child-idolizing parent would not intentionally make Eli his model of paternal love; neither would the most indulgent sinner deduce the parental character of God from the conduct of Eli toward his sons. When placed in its true light, conscience would, in each case, decide that parental love is as inseparably connected with the correction of that which is evil, as with delighting in that which is good and holy.

Acts 14. 22.
Heb. 12. 8.

Jas. 1. 2-4.

Matt. 5. 48.

The apostle taught "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God; and that if we do not receive chastisement, we are not the children of God. If we truly believe this, however difficult the lesson, we shall endeavour to account it joy when we fall into temptation, because the great end of all our trials is the perfecting our faith; that by faith the righteousness of Christ may be wrought in us, that we may be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect.

Book V.

CHAPTER IV.

LET the sweet work of prayer and praise
Employ the youngest breath ;
Thus to prepare for longest days,
Or fit for early death.

Book V.

CHAPTER IV.

SAMUEL AND HIS SONS.

The Life of Samuel—His early dedication to God—His long life—The Sons of Samuel—The Israelites desire a King—Samuel as a Prophet and as a Judge—After his death he repeats his former denunciation on the King—Departed Saints not intercessors.

AN idea is sometimes entertained, that when the love of God is strongly manifested in the heart of a child, that child will not live to mature age. And it is a fact that our heavenly Father does often most wonderfully fit for His own presence infants whom He is about to take to Himself. It is also an encouraging truth, that the Lord often implants His Holy Spirit in the hearts of little children, in order to prepare them for a long course of eminent service on earth: and this preparation is seen in their infantile yet firm obedience to His commands.

Of this Samuel is a distinguished example. Having ^{1 Sam. i. 27, 28.} been received by his parents as a special gift from the Lord, he was consecrated to His service, and when a child ministered in the temple. There, the Lord stood ^{3.} before the infant Samuel, spoke to him as with a human voice; and intrusted him with such a message as would have tried the stout heart of manhood to deliver. And

when this child became a man, he held the combined offices of prophet and judge: he anointed two kings over the house of Israel; and before he died, had faithfully served God for nearly eighty years.

1 Sam. 8.

Notwithstanding the holy career of Samuel, and the warning presented in the death of Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Samuel followed the example set them by the sons of Eli. They "turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment." It was, therefore, no marvel that the elders of Israel rejected them as judges. But in asking for a king that they might be like other nations, the Lord said that they rejected Him as their king.

Blunt's Scriptural Coincidences, Pt. 2, Sec. 15.

Though the establishment of the kingdom became, in the infinite wisdom of God, subservient to higher ends; yet, by exciting the jealousy of Ephraim, it was the incipient cause of its after division, and of the long train of evils to the separated ten tribes. So largely fraught with future evil was this desire for worldly aggrandisement—this covert thought of conformity to heathen nations—this plausible pretext for a visible unity in earthly government, which was, in truth, the rejection of the righteous rule of the Holy One of Israel.

1 Sam. 10.

Though Samuel had foreseen some of the evils the people would bring upon themselves in desiring a king, yet by the command of God he granted their request, and anointed Saul as the first king of Israel.

12.

After establishing Saul as the king, Samuel called upon the people to testify of his integrity as a judge. "They said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed

us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand." And to shew that the Lord disapproved of their asking a king, Samuel called upon Him to send thunder and rain that day: "and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel." They then confessed their sin, and intreated the prophet to pray for them.

"And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart; and turn ye not aside.....For the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people. Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way: only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things He hath done for you."

"But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king."

Sixteen years after thus solemnly addressing Israel, 1 Sam. 15. 1-44. Samuel was the bearer of a message from the Lord to Saul, commanding him to smite Amalek, to slay every man, and to destroy their cattle. When Saul had obeyed this command as far as pleased himself, the prophet was the Lord's messenger to reprove him for the incompleteness of his obedience. He endeavoured to exonerate himself for his omissions by attributing them to the people, yet he implied his own acquiescence in these omissions when he added, that they proceeded from the high motive of paying special honour

to God. Samuel replied, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

1 Sa. 15. 23-28. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

"Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king."

16. 1-13. Immediately after this, Samuel anointed David to be the king of Israel. And when Samuel died, "all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah."

28. 4. Four years after the death of Samuel, the Philistines pitched their tents in Shunem, and Saul, conscious of his own disobedience and estrangement from God, was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

28. 5-10. And when the Lord did not answer him, he sought a woman with a familiar spirit.

28. 16-20. In his last visit to the king, Samuel had pronounced the judgments of the Lord for disobedience; now when called from the tomb he confirms that prediction by saying, "The Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy.....The Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and hath given it to thy neighbour, even to David.....the Lord shall deliver the host of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.

The words of Samuel may teach a solemn and practical lesson to those who seek instruction from disembodied spirits. The Lord has said that He will set His face against the soul that turneth after such as

have familiar spirits. All that Saul could gather from this evoked spirit was a repetition of a previous sentence of condemnation which was to be speedily executed.

In the history of Manasseh we may see that one who had committed this offence humbled himself before the Lord, that the Lord heard his supplication, and as a proof of his change of heart, the offender removed from his kingdom all that appertained to idolatry. And we are taught that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin; therefore from the sin of witchcraft, though it is an abomination to the Lord.

In the book of Jeremiah the name of the prophet Samuel is associated with that of Moses as a powerful intercessor with God. And before Samuel delivered the first message of judgment to Saul, he cried to the Lord all night in his behalf. Now, when risen from the dead he makes no intercession for him: all he can do is to repeat the solemn words of the Lord. Abraham when on earth interceded earnestly for Sodom, but when he was in heaven, he declined affording any aid to the family of Dives who were on the earth. Intercession is never mentioned in Scripture as the work of angels, or of departed saints. Distinctively, and in accordance with the above instances, intercession by the saints appears the appropriate work for the present time; and, definitely, judgment the appointed work for the future. If this is God's order, man is not permitted to reverse it at his pleasure.

From this future occupation of the saints, the inference is drawn, that they are now worthy to judge in things which appertain to their brethren: yet, since

man in his proneness to extremes may unnecessarily judge his brother, the inspired caution is given to "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come." In prophetic vision it has been seen that judgment was given to the saints of the Most High: and to a Christian Church it has been said, "The saints shall judge the world."

Blessed be God, we have now one unseen Intercessor, "one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." He will hereafter come as the Judge, and all the saints with Him.

1 Cor. 4. 5.

Dan. 7. 22.

1 Tim. 2. 5.

Zech. 14. 5.

1 Thess. 3. 13.

Book V.

CHAPTER V.

“SEE the Judge our nature wearing,
Cloth'd in majesty divine !
Ye, who long for His appearing,
Then shall say, ‘This God is mine.’
Gracious Saviour,
Own us in that day for thine.”

NEWTON.

Book V.

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSION TO THE HISTORY OF THE JUDGES.

Salvation by faith or by works?—Faith the principle, Works the manifestation—Man judged by his works—The Book of Judges delineates the judgments and the mercies of the Lord—Christ the Judge of all the earth—Both sorrow and rejoicing at His appearing.

ALTHOUGH the question whether men are to be saved by faith or by works has been discussed in all ages of the Christian Church, no such difficulty can arise when reading the history of Israel during the time of the Judges. Jehovah himself was then the Supreme Judge of Israel: and we find, that if the Israelites served the Lord, they, according to that dispensation, enjoyed temporal prosperity; but if they bowed down to idols, they were made servants to idol worshippers. Bowing down to idols is an overt act; it is the outworking of the principles entertained in the heart, and is a plain and palpable evidence of the faith received. If Israel believed in the idol, they bowed before it, and thus shewed that they did not believe in Jehovah. So, if they put away their idols, and worshipped at the altar of the Lord, they manifested a change in their faith. They then acted as believers in Jehovah, and, as His servants, they were delivered from their enemies. Bowing down to idols is visible disobedience to the first

and second of the ten commandments. Bowing before pictures, crosses, and places called sacred, is alike visible disobedience to those commandments. But where nor head nor knee bows before such material symbol, idols may reign in the heart, and their worship be manifested by the outward life. Jesus said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon:" David Martin has rendered this, "*Vous ne pouvez servir Dieu et les richesses.*" Riches, the world's esteem, and self, are real though subtle idols; they have their worshippers; and this worship is also known by the overt acts,—by the works of the worshipper. And thus, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," is in full agreement with "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Lu. 16. 13.

Rom. 8. 13.

John 3. 36.

When "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." And He "put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." When Jesus is received into the heart of a man, and he, by the power of the Holy Ghost, is born again, some work for the Lord is also assigned to him. It is most evident that his works cannot give life; that he works because he is alive; and that his works prove he is alive.

Matt. 16. 27.
Rev. 2. 23.
20. 12, 13.
22. 12.
Rom. 2. 6-10.
1 Cor. 5. 10.

From the words of the Lord Jesus, from the visions of the beloved disciple, and the assertions of the great apostle, we learn that men will be judged by their works: and we gather that their works will not only prove whether men are alive or dead, but will determine, for those who are alive toward God, their future position in the kingdom of heaven.

He, who is "a just God and a Saviour," has thus published His rule of judgment. He has even laid before us in this Book of Judges a living picture of His future acts of mercy and of retribution. The delegated judges of Israel were fallible men, and only according to the measure of their faith were they deliverers. Thus, Samson, who was half-hearted toward God, is said to have judged Israel not entirely, but in the days of the Philistines: whilst judges of more obedient faith overcame their enemies, and more truly reflected the image of the Supreme Judge; and according to the language of one who poetically described heroic life in those days, they were "god-like men."

Though the judges were specially raised up to deliver Israel from their enemies, they were for the remainder of their lives, God's vicegerents in maintaining the honour of His laws, and in guiding and guarding the people. So Jesus, the Saviour, the Deliverer, when He brings peace to the sinner, becomes his Lord. By His word, and by His Holy Spirit, He must rule in the heart of each individual believer, and govern the whole body of believers. He is acquainted with all their ways: He searches the reins and hearts. He is "ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." Man must now be ruled by that Man by whom he will hereafter be judged,—by the Son of Man, who is both God and Man.

When the Lord Jesus comes visibly to reign and to judge, His glory will not then be veiled in poverty: He will not then be a stumbling-block to the aspiring Jew, neither will the learned Greek account Him foolishness. He will come in the glory of His Father, in His own glory, with all the holy angels, to gather together His saints, and "to execute judgment upon all."

Ps. 139. 1-5.

7, 8, 9.

Rev. 2. 23.

Acts 10. 38-42.

John 5. 26-27.

1 Cor. 1. 23.

Matt. 16. 27.

25. 31, 32.

Jude 15.

From the Book of Judges we may realize the opposite feelings which would be awakened by the appointment of a judge. When a judge was raised up for Israel, the armies of the Assyrians, Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Canaanites, Midianites, and Philistines, were severally humbled and defeated. Then the Israelites rejoiced in deliverance and victory.

Thus Deborah called on kings and princes to praise God for avenging Israel, and leading captivity captive, and added, "So let thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

This is but a faint image of the position of the enemies and friends of Jesus the Messiah, when He shall come to judge the earth. The one will then say "to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;" while heaven and the holy apostles and prophets are called on to rejoice over the destruction of Babylon; for the Judge "hath avenged the blood of His servants:" He hath judged the great whore who covered the earth with her idolatry and her sorcery. And the one voice of the multitude in heaven is represented as "saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God." Then will come the marriage supper. Satan will be bound and cast into the pit. The glorified saints will reign with Christ over the earth; they will receive "a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, has prepared for them." The kingdom will then be the Lord's: all power will be subjected to Him. And on the vesture and the thigh of the Man Christ Jesus will this name be written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Rev. 6. 15-17.

18. 19-21.

19.

20. 1-6.

2 Tim. 4. 8.

Book VI.

CONCLUSION.

“ Soon the whole,
Like a parched scroll,
Shall before my amazed sight uproll,
And without a screen,
At one burst be seen,
The Presence wherein I have ever been.

“ Oh ! who shall bear
The blinding glare
Of the Majesty that shall meet us there ;
What eye may gaze
On the unveil'd blaze
Of the light-girdled throne of the Ancient of days ?
Christ us aid,
Himself be our shade,
That in that dread day we be not dismayed ! ”

J. WHYTEHEAD.

Book VI.

CONCLUSION.

Facts—The Universal Sinfulness of Man—The Duty of Man to seek out and to publish the acts of the Lord—The Judgments and the Mercies of God—Sacrifices for Sin—The Great Sacrifice—Our own Position before God depends upon union with that Sacrifice—The Sentences of Welcome and of Banishment—The Present, the only Day of Salvation.

It has been said, that "a simple fact is worth all the comments and conclusions in the world." In the word of God we have the narrative of a long series of facts. We have there the commands of God followed by the disobedience of man, the mercy of God providing a remedy for the guilt of transgression, and that mercy continually exercised toward men who believe God, and obey Him. We find the positive statements concerning sin, judgment, and mercy illustrated by the facts recorded in this holy book.

We are not informed whether, or not, Solomon wrote out a copy of the law, according to the command of Deut. 17. 18, 19. God, but we are told that he applied his "heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness," and he has given us the result of this large experience. He has written, "Lo, Ecc. 7. 25, 29. this only have I found, that God hath made man

Acts 5. 34.

Rom. 3. 10-18.

upright; but they have sought out many inventions." Another great man, instructed by Gamaliel, whose "learning was so eminent, and his character so revered," that he was called the "Beauty of the Law," this pupil of the man who was held "in reputation among all the people," afterward entered the higher school of Him, who is "the truth," and whom Solomon mentions under the title of "wisdom;" this truly learned scholar reiterates his assertions concerning the entire sinfulness of man saying, "There is none righteous, no, not one.....none that understandeth.....none that seeketh after God.....all gone out of the way.....none that doeth good, no, not one."

Has not the red print declared the same melancholy fact, even from the overt disobedience of Eve to the domestic omissions of Samuel? Has it not shewn from the word of the Lord, that there is none righteous before God, not one that can appeal to his works as entitling him to the favour of God, or to any inheritance in the kingdom of heaven?

Ex. 10. 2.
13. 8, 14.
Dent. 4. 9.
Joel 1. 3.
1 Chro. 16. 8-36.
Ps. 105.

1 Kings 8. 43.
2 Chro. 6. 33.

Lest such a view of the exceeding sinfulness of man should suggest any doubt whether a being so estranged from God is permitted to search into His ways toward this fallen race, we here note some encouragements which the Lord in His word has given us for so doing. Beside the positive statements in Ezekiel, that the Lord will be known by His judgments and His mercies, Israel was repeatedly commanded to tell their children, and their children's children, the great and wonderful works of the Lord. The Psalm, commencing with an exhortation to "make known the deeds of the Lord among the people," and to talk of all His wondrous works, is twice recorded. So, too, the prayer of Solomon, in which he prays that all the people of the

earth may know the name of the Lord, is repeated. And the prayer of Hezekiah, in which he also prays "that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even thou alone." This also is twice recorded. And the Bereans were accounted noble, because they searched the Scriptures daily.

2 Kings 19. 19.
Isa. 37. 20.

The truth and divine inspiration of this book is the firm ground on which we stand, and on which alone we can stand. On it, we take hold of the precepts and promises of the Lord: in it, we see the past and the future. We see not only the acts of the Lord, but His will that those acts should be published to all the "inhabitants of the world: both low and high, rich and poor, together."

2 Pet. 1. 21.

Ps. 49. 1, 2.

And among the acts of the Lord thus to be published abroad, we have seen the solemn acts of judgment. The blue type has told that a defiled paradise was closed to man, and guarded by a flaming sword; that an ungodly world was suddenly destroyed by water; an ungodly city suddenly consumed by fire; a rebellious family instantly devoured by the opening earth. And as nothing is beyond the power of the living God, so nothing is beneath His notice: for the Israelite who gathered sticks contrary to His command, and he who took forbidden gold and a prohibited garment, were not allowed to pass unpunished. In this narrative we have seen the truth of God's predictions concerning judgment in the reality of their execution.

Yet when Jehovah is spoken of as a God who threatens and inflicts penalties for transgression, though that which is true is asserted, and though solemn facts are affirmed, there are other truths and other facts which must at the same time be remembered in order truly to learn what God is, and what He is toward us.

Ps. 103. 8-14.
145.

We read, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust."

And has not the purple type recorded the abounding mercies of the faithful, covenant-keeping God? Have we not seen the promise of mercy accompanying the first denunciation of wrath? Have we not seen a man, who "walked with God," ascend to heaven, without enduring the predicted penalty of death; another man, who walked with God, saved, and his family with him, when the world was drowned; another who was rescued as "a brand plucked out of the fire"? May we not add, that every visitation of wrath has been the special season for the Lord to shew forth the riches of His love towards those who believe in His mercy? And have we not as plainly seen the truth and faithfulness of God, and the reality of facts in His mercies as in His judgments?

Lev. 4. 22-35.

Under the old covenant dispensation, when an Israelite was convinced of sin, he offered an animal in sacrifice to God; he laid his hand on its head, and the sentence of death was passed on that animal. In the new covenant, God has laid the sin of man on His own Son: He has endured the punishment which our sins have deserved: and our definite position before God may be known, not by ascertaining whether we were

born of a sinful race,—whether we have disobeyed the commands of God,—whether we have offered vain, self-willed sacrifices ; for all this must be admitted from the testimony of the written Word of God and the concurrent witness of our own hearts ; but our relationship to God may be known by ascertaining whether, as sinners, we entirely rely on the substituted sacrifice of the Son of God ; for if we believe in Jesus as the Christ, 1 John 5. 1. we are born of God. And by our union with Him we have the position of children in the Father's house. If we are obedient children, we may expect to receive our Father's smile of love ; if willingly disobedient, His frown of anger. As His children we need continually to look by faith to that sacrifice which has brought us into covenant with God : and by connecting the lives of these servants of God with the dispensation in which they lived, and comparing them with our lives, having due regard to the covenant under which we live, we may ascertain whether, according to God's rule, we are walking as His obedient children.

If we are born only after the flesh, having no faith in the great sin-offering, therefore no portion in it, we, like Cain, Nadab and Abihu, Korah, Hophni and Phinehas, may be offering sacrifices before the Lord,—sacrifices according to the devices of our own hearts ; Ps. 106. 29. and we may see in the anger of God toward these men what will be His sentence of condemnation against us.

We have seen that we must be saved by faith, and that we shall be judged by our works. Accordingly Jesus represents himself, when sitting upon His throne of glory, as awarding blessings to those who have shewn Matt. 25. 34-45. their faith in Him by their acts of love toward His people, and as saying to them, "Come, ye blessed of

my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ;" and, as saying to those who have not shewn their faith in Him by love to His people, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

We have seen that one dispensation has passed away; we read of another yet to come. In this present dispensation, there are words addressed to men which it is evident cannot be applied to them after the day of judgment,—such as, "Now God commandeth all men every where to repent." "Now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation." And the saying of our Lord, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out:" and those words of Jesus, of the Spirit and the bride, "Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

We are taught in the Book of God, that after the day of final account, the joy or the woe will be everlasting. The sentence awarding the highest happiness or the deepest misery will then be irreversible. Truth will be no subject for discussion. Certainty will beam forth from all within, around, and above. Faith will not then be needed, for every sentient faculty will attest that all is reality.

Jesus has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." And, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

That these pages may induce some sinners to believe these words of the Lord, and "to flee from the wrath to come;" and that they may enable some believers in

Jesus to lay a firmer hold on eternal life, and to rejoice ^{1 Tim. 6. 12.}
more in His love, is the earnest desire of the writer;
and to God be all the glory.

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

